A MODEL FOR BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEOLOGY

AND ETHICS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCHMAN

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of Southern California

School of Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Religion

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by

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June 1970

This dissertation, written by

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under the direction of___his___Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF RELIGION

Faculty Committee

Date _Sept. 14, 1970_   _J. C. Hough_

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CHAPTER I

A SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS
OF THE PROBLEM

There are many uncertainties facing man today. How will the

advances in nuclear research be used for the future of man, positively

or negatively? What does the future hold in store for man--increasing

racial hostility and violence, unity in a search for a common future,

national and international upheaval, overpopulation and starvation?

In light of all these uncertainties, however, there emerges from the

ranks of the protestant churches in America one thing that is certain;

the protestant churches today are in turmoil. Indeed, one could be

much bolder and say that in light of current sociological evidence the

churches are facing a cleavage which could tear them apart.[1] But what

is the nature of this division which is slashing away at the "unity"

of the faith?

One need only look at the names of some of the current books to

get a hint of both the sources and contents of the struggle in ques-

tion--*The Comfortable Pew, God's Frozen People, The God-Evaders, The

Suburban Captivity of the Churches, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies,

Who's Killing the Church, The Gathering Storm in the Churches, The

Enemy in the Pew.* One gathers quickly that a serious question is being

raised about the nature of the contemporary church. More than this,

one gathers that a strong critical voice is being lifted up against the

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[1]Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden
City: Doubleday, 1969).

churches, a voice which is reminiscent of the prophet Amos. It appears as though the contemporary churchman is being taken to task for some kind of inactivity or inauthentic expression of the Christian faith. He is being challenged about the way in which he is handling the Christian faith in the present day situation.

The fact that a critical voice is being raised is not enough, however. In order for criticism to be evaluated one needs a great deal more. He needs to know first exactly what the problem is. After this has been described he needs to look at the problem backwards and forwards. He must look backwards to find the source of the problem, its various components and composition. Only with this knowledge will he be able to evaluate the relative "legitimacy" of the problem, i.e. is it really a problem of any consequence? After having followed these steps, he must look forward from the problem and look at the direction in which it could take him in the future, that is to say he must see what its consequences could be. If in fact it appears as though the critic has leveled his criticism in view of both the source and the trend, then one must face the criticism squarely and see how the problem might be overcome.

In light of this we find ourselves presented with a general criticism: the church today is inactive, unchristian, inauthentic, and dying. In view of this general statement we then ask the question as to specifics. What exactly is the "problem" of the churches today, if indeed they have one? How has the problem taken shape, and what are its main features? Where will its consequences lead us in the future?

A. PETER BERGER

When attempting to specify the criticism leveled against the

modern church one finds it coming from several different directions.

On the one side comes criticism like that of sociologist Peter Berger.

Berger, who seems to have an affinity for caustic statements, holds

nothing back in discussing the present church situation. In his book

The Noise of Solemn Assemblies he begins his criticism of the modern

church in the following manner:

> A writer in the nineteenth century described the Church of
> England as the Conservative party gathered for prayer. There are
> many situations in which this statement would not be too inappro-
> priate for our own contemporary Protestant church life in America.
> On the campus, for example, the religious organizations are all too
> often the gathering place for the most conformist, the most anti-
> intellectual, the most prejudiced segments of the student popula-
> tion. And the view of society we find among our clergy and
> clericalized laymen is all too often a collection plate for every
> delusion to be found in the market. We would argue that such
> religiosity is something worse than mere sluggishness. There are
> many cases in which it offers the basis of a lifelong act of self-
> deception, of escape from the realities of existence--precisely
> what Sartre has called bad faith. But in the light of the sending
> out of Jesus' messengers it is something even worse than that. It
> is a betrayal of the Gospel.[2]

This statement is but a launching pad for what follows in his book.

Although some of the statements are dated, as will be shown on the

pages which follow, he has pointed to a general tendency which does

exist in the churches. He points to case after case of inactivity in

the churches, ethically and theologically. In the end he concludes

that a very live option for the honestly committed Christian of today

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[2]Peter Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (Garden City:
Doubleday, 1961), p. 14.

is to remain outside the organized church. Berger's central criticism,
then, is inactivity and inauthentic handling of the main thrust of
primitive Christianity on the part of the contemporary church.

B. GIBSON WINTER

Joining Berger in his critical view of the modern church is
sociologist Gibson Winter. In his book *The Suburban Captivity of the
Churches* Winter is much more positive than Berger. While he is careful
to note the failures and weaknesses of the modern protestant church, he
also points to some strengths and points where renewal within the
structure is taking place. Hence, the committed "insider" might be
more open to the criticism of Winter than that of Berger.

In the particular book cited here Winter deals with the contem-
porary church *vis-a-vis* the metropolis. Since his analysis shows the
increasingly metropolitan composition of the United States, he is
concerned with the impact the church is having on the metropolis. As
might be inferred from the title, Winter feels that for various reasons,
not the least of which is self-preservation, the church has failed to
be the church in the metropolis. Instead of leaping headfirst into the
problems of depersonalization, alienation, racial segregation, and other
issues of the city, churchmen have been among the first to flee. And
upon leaving the city they soon plant themselves firmly in the security
of the suburb, composed of like-types, intellectually, economically,
and racially. Thus, the church fails to be the church.

Winter is careful about terminology, however, and his care is

helpful. Throughout his work he uses two different terms, "church" and "organization church." As might be expected the former term applies to the ideological and normative institutional expression of the faith whereas the latter term applies to the practical and descriptive institution which one can delineate today. It is against the organization church that Winter levels his criticism. While the organization church continues to entrench itself in the suburbs, the metropolitan problems are complicated. While churchmen should recognize the necessity of a missionary stance in reference to the city, they rather concentrate their efforts on suburban affairs of a private religion. As Winter states the problem:

> Segregation became the path to stability. While the metropolis needed new channels of communication, the more homogeneous communities on the fringe of the city were struggling to break communication with other groups in the metropolis. These citadels became dungeons for congregational and parochial life. The churches entered a period of suburban captivity, deserted the central city and aligned themselves with the status panic, becoming mere refuges for the fleeing middle classes. The churches, which should have facilitated communication, became instruments to block it.[3]

Thus, for Winter as for Berger, the major criticism is that the modern church has failed to live up to its calling.

C. JEFFREY HADDEN

These two criticisms of the modern church help bring our problem into clearer perspective. The clearest articulation of the problem with which we are confronted, however, comes in Jeffrey Hadden's book

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[3]Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 38-39.

The Gathering Storm in the Churches. Like the other two critics Hadden is a sociologist. More in keeping with his discipline than the others, however, Hadden relies heavily upon statistics to make his case. His book is an attempt to present in as clear a manner as possible the problem which his studies tell him is confronting the churches today.

1. Three Crises

For Hadden there is a very real crisis situation which seems to be centered in a struggle between the clergy and the laity. Hadden demonstrates in the course of his book that there are highly divergent or even contradictory positions held by laymen and clergy concerning several aspects of church life. These "crises" can be seen in three major areas: there is a crisis in meaning and purpose of the church, in belief, and in authority.[4]

a. *Meaning and purpose.* First, there is a crisis about the meaning and purpose of the church. On the one hand one finds the position of people like Berger and Winter. They are arguing essentially that the church is no longer relevant for the needs of man today. It has lost its sense of mission and priorities, and is concentrating its efforts in areas that are relatively unimportant. From this point of view one sees the church as having a basic responsibility for the social welfare of mankind. Hence, if there are political situations which are judged by Christians as having a dehumanizing effect upon men, e.g. the problem of civil rights in the U.S.A., then it is the

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[4]Hadden, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-33.

responsibility of the church to involve itself in the task of alle-

viating the inhuman conditions and/or institutions. No area of life

which affects man is "off limits" to the Christian and his church.

Thus, the Christian finds himself necessarily involved in matters of

politics, economics, and general social affairs.

In order to gain a closer impression of what is being said here

one need only read the words of men like Winter, Berger, or the young

German theologian Jürgen Moltmann. Winter states: "The task of the

church is reconciliation of men with God and with one another in human

society. The ministry of reconciliation between blue collar and white

collar, Negro and white, outsider and insider, central city and suburb

is the work of the churches."[5] While Winter and Berger might disagree

on the way in which "social action" and involvement in societal

problems might be related to the church, they are in agreement that

concern about the problems of society is paramount. As Berger states

his case: "The social relevance of the Christian faith is an impera-

tive only of the Christian faith. It is the nature of the Christian

faith, not the nature of society, which calls for the prophetic mission

of the Christian community. Christians are called to be the salt of

the earth. If they cease to be that, they risk betraying the very

purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ. . . . The very being of the

Church is endangered when the sense of mission dissolves in the vacuum

of social irrelevance."[6] And finally, in somewhat more theological

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[5]Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[6]Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

language, stands Moltmann: "The Christian Church which follows Christ's mission to the world is engaged also in following Christ's service of the world. It has its nature as the body of the crucified and risen Christ only where in specific acts of service it is obedient to its mission to the world. Its existence is completely bound to the fulfilling of its service. For this reason it is nothing in itself, but all that it is, it is in existing for others. It is the Church of God where it is a Church for the world."[7] Thus, this one side emphasizes that the meaning and purpose of the church is bound up with the connection between the church and the world. There is a very real necessity of involvement of the church in the creation and maintenance of a world society. This position is upheld not only by sociologists and theologians, but also by a predominance of clergy and some laity.

On the other hand one finds a position which maintains that the church is to stay away from involvement in socio-political affairs. This is to say that the meaning and purpose of the church is not bound up with the engagement of the church in society's problems. While individual Christians may or may not involve themselves in various social concerns, the church as a corporate body is asked to stay clear. This position is held by a number of laymen, as well as by a minority of clergy and theologians. *Christianity Today*, which views itself as a theological periodical for evangelical Christians, has published a number of articles and statements which represent this position. In an

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[7]Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1967) p. 327.

article entitled "Listen, Clergymen!" a number of statements by laymen about the church were printed.[8] Some of these statements articulate well this second position concerning the meaning and purpose of the church. "The Church's primary responsibility is to bear witness to God and to tell men that salvation is available by grace through the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. . . . Whenever the Church departs from this and takes on activities where Christ and the Gospel are not paramount, then it is not true to its primary purpose and responsibility." "The institutional church of today appears to be committed more to perfecting plans and programs for dealing with man's temporal needs--social, economic, physical, and political--than to dealing with his spiritual needs, individual regeneration and commitment to a life of dedication and consecration to the true mission of Christ's Church." "Laymen see the Church moving away from its basic mission--preaching the Gospel to all men--to a preoccupation with civil affairs. . . . Laymen are saying: let the Church concentrate on its fundamental mission--conversion of men to personal faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer and nurturing them in that faith. These converted men and women will deal with the political, social, and economic problems much more effectively than any church lobby or any church pronouncements."[9]

Thus, one readily notes a difference at least in emphasis. The first group sees the meaning and purpose of the church linked to

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[8]Elmer W. Engstrom, Horace H. Hull, and Roger Hull, "Listen, Clergymen!" *Christianity Today,* XI:6 (December 23, 1969), 3-5.

[9]*Ibid.,* p. 4.

engagement with societal problems. The second group distinguishes between individual Christians and the corporate body, i.e. the Church. For this second group involvement in social concerns is a very appropriate task of the individual Christian, but not for the gathered community. The Church is the nurturing institution which provides a background on the basis of which decisions about societal action or inaction might be made. These two positions, then, represent the opposing factions which contribute most heavily to the crisis about meaning and purpose.

b. *Belief.* The second area of crisis noted by Hadden is that of belief. What is being emphasized here is that there are vast disagreements among churchmen as to the content of the Christian faith. In popular as well as academic journals one constantly notes the various realms of controversy. As Hadden sees the problem, there seems to be a growing doubt about "orthodox theology."[10] "Orthodox" refers here to those expressions of Christian faith or belief which have been a traditional part of the faith. At first glance one might note such subjects as virgin birth, bodily resurrection of Jesus, and other such beliefs which have functioned in the past as central belief statements in most Christian groups. Hadden here is not discussing the relative reality of the content of the statements, but is noting rather that there seems to be a growing trend of disagreement with these traditional beliefs. He points to a study done by sociologists Rodney Stark

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[10]Hadden, *op. cit.,* p. 20.

and Charles Y. Glock, and reports some of their conclusions by citing
this statement: "The new cleavages are not over such matters as how to
worship God properly, but whether or not there is a God of the sort it
makes any sense to worship; not over whether the bread and wine of
communion become the actual blood and body of Christ through transub-
stantiation, or are only symbolic, but over whether or not Jesus was
merely a man."[11] It should be pointed out here that this "crisis" is
not only a disagreement among the denominations of protestant
Christianity; there are tremendous areas of disagreement in belief
within each of the denominations themselves. In reporting the studies
in this area Hadden states: "Of the six Protestant denominations
studied, only one even approached a consensus of belief."[12] This
applies to both laity and clergy.

c. *Authority*. The third area of crisis noted by Hadden is that
of authority. This particular crisis is perhaps a result of the other
two areas of change and disagreement. The important thing in this
crisis is that while there exists an authority problem perhaps on many
fronts, the major conflict is in evidence between laity and clergy.[13]
One could infer this from the statements and composition of the poles
in the crisis previously mentioned over meaning and purpose.

As one might expect, the clergy has had a great influence on the
directions in which the churches have been moving. As time progresses,

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[11]Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), pp. 117-118.

[12]Hadden, *op. cit.*, p. 21.   [13]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

however, the laymen are beginning to take their own power seriously and move towards a serious questioning of the traditional authority. What used to happen in isolated instances is now happening on a much wider scale. In the aftermath of the October 15, 1969, Viet Nam Moratorium, a significant number of Chicago laymen either withdrew or threatened to withdraw their financial support of local churches due to those churches' at least token acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the Moratorium if not direct participation in it.[14] Since the church is a voluntary organization, which runs on voluntary gifts, this kind of action/reaction can have devastating effects. And with such a syndrome of action/reaction a large number of questions is raised both in connection with where the authority in the church resides, and with what the meaning and purpose, indeed nature, of the church really is.

This, then, is the background against which one might view the emerging crisis or turmoil in the local church. Hadden provides us with a good framework for perceiving the general outline of this crisis, and then in the course of his detailed study moves into a depth report on each stream which is feeding into the mainstream of chaos. Since his study does attempt to look at all the major factors of the present situation, it is to the body of that study which we now turn. By understanding this we can begin to think constructively about how to pull out of the current "tailspin" in which we find ourselves.

Hadden's specific task in gathering data for his book was to find out what the current attitudes of churches and churchmen were to

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[14]News story reported on KFWB, Los Angeles, California.

involvement in social issues, especially civil rights. As Hadden him-
self states it: "The central thesis of this volume is that the
Protestant churches are involved in a deep and entangling crisis which
in the years ahead may seriously disrupt or alter the very nature of
the church. The civil rights crisis in this nation is seen as the
central issue which has served as a catalyst to unleash the sources of
latent conflict which have been gathering a Protestantism for more
than a half century. . . . From a narrow perspective, this is a study
of the church's responses to the civil rights confrontation in this
nation, but the broader objective is to understand why the church has
responded to civil rights as it has, as well as the implications of
this response."[15]

As one reads through Hadden's well-documented study, one finds
a number of questions being asked which are really prior to the ques-
tion of involvement in civil rights. What is the meaning of the gospel?
What kind of a christology should the church have? Is there an iden-
tifiable "Christian understanding" of man and his world? When there
has been an attempt to deal seriously with these sorts of theological
questions, one can move with a much better perspective into the more
narrowly ethical questions such as "what is my duty as a Christian to
other men?", "how does one 'live out' the Christian faith?" and "what
role should we take as Christians in planning the future of our world?"
What is being stated here is essentially that there are two comple-
mentary components to understanding the Christian faith, one theological

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[15]Hadden, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

and one ethical. And at least in terms of Hadden's study the theological precedes the ethical. Therefore, as we look critically at the content of Hadden's study, with supplemental material primarily coming from Winter and Berger, we shall examine first the theological component and second the ethical component. As Hadden states the problem, there is a crisis in the relation between these two components, and a special attempt will be made to show where that tension arises.

2. Theological Component of the Problem

In keeping with the way in which Hadden himself deals with the components of the crisis we examine initially the theological component. In order to catch the full significance of the rift which is taking place we must divide this into several headings. First, we look at a description and comparison of the religious beliefs of clergymen from all types of major protestant churches, i.e. from highly literalistic and credal positions to highly symbolic and noncredal positions, plus the various shades of mixtures. Second, we make the same kind of description and comparison of laymen from these same denominations. Third, we compare laity and clergy on the basis of their religious beliefs.

a. *Descriptions of the religious beliefs of clergymen.* To secure the statistics on religious beliefs of clergy, Hadden mailed questionnaires to a random sampling of clergymen from the following denominations: American Baptist, American Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, Missouri Synod Lutheran, and Presbyterian, U.S.A. His

overall response rate was 67%, with each denomination responding to a higher or lower degree.[16]

On the questionnaires were a number of statements to which the clergymen had to respond. In responding they had to pick one of six categories which fit their response best: definitely agree, agree, probably agree, probably disagree, disagree, definitely disagree.[17] This approach could present at least one methodological problem which is important to note. How unambiguous are the statements to which one must respond? Do they allow a high degree of interpretation or are they quite clearly stated? The problem raised here is essentially that two people could answer exactly the same on a particular question and yet their understandings could be completely different. For example, two people could be asked, "Do you believe in life after death" and both answer "definitely agree." Even though they had answered the same, person A might mean that he would live on after death just about like he had been living before death, while person B might mean that he would live on after death in that his "matter" would not cease to exist, but be transformed into some other kind of function or usage, e.g. helping the soil to grow. In the case of Hadden this methodological problem appears to be overcome. For example, instead of asking the question "Do you accept the resurrection of Jesus as an historical fact?" which could allow for several understandings of history, he asks the clergymen to respond to the statement: "I accept Jesus' physical resurrection as an objective historical fact in the same sense that

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[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.   [17]*Ibid.*, p. 38.

Lincoln's physical death was an historical fact."[18] The qualification of "physical" detracts from the possibility of agreeing while holding contrary understandings as does the use of Lincoln's death, in that death is a common human experience which continues to happen in an observable sense whereas resurrection doesn't, at least in a physically observable sense. Thus, in terms of methodology, it appears as though Hadden succeeded in bringing forth the real distinctions which could be made between the clergymen, rather than making a strong case on weak evidence.

But what is the evidence which Hadden uncovered by means of this study concerning the comparative religious beliefs of clergymen from various denominations? Essentially, Hadden demonstrates that clergymen from the denominations which he studied differ significantly in their religious beliefs, i.e. in their theology. And interestingly enough he shows also that there are differences not only between the clergymen from different denominations, but also within each denomination itself. These latter differences seem to be both a reflection of age and location. For example, a young Methodist pastor serving an inner-city church would probably have a somewhat different set of beliefs than an older Methodist pastor serving a suburban or rural area. These conclusions must be seen in context, however, to appreciate the work that was done.

Hadden first looks at traditional belief statements with a view towards establishing what kind of differences exist concerning how

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[18]*Ibid.*, p. 45.

literalistically one views the Bible. Is the Bible the fundamental

source of authority for the Christian? In order to arrive at an answer

for this question Hadden asked the clergy to respond to the following

questions in terms of one of the six previously mentioned categories:

1. I believe in a literal or nearly literal interpretation of the Bible.
2. Adam and Eve were individual historical persons.
3. Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant Word of God not only in matters of faith but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters.
4. An understanding of the language of myth and symbol is as important for interpreting Biblical literature as are history and archaeology.[19]

As one readily sees each one of these questions has a little different

thrust; each one, however, reveals at the same time the position one

maintains *vis-a-vie* the use and interpretation of the Bible, hence its

relative authority for each man. The response to these statements

produced a clear-cut answer: ". . . contemporary Protestant ministers

substantially disagree in matters as basic as how the Bible should be

used and interpreted."[20] One finds also that a kind of continuum may

be drawn with the Episcopalians at one end and the Missouri Synod

Lutherans at the other. The former group would be the least literal-

istic, i.e. the least inclined to accept the Bible in a literal sense

as its source of authority, whereas the latter group would be the most

literalistic. For example, concerning the first statement one finds

only eleven percent of the Episcopalian clergy in agreement, but 76 per-

cent of the Missouri Synod Lutherans in agreement.[21]

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[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 38-43.   [20]*Ibid.*, p. 39.

[21]*Ibid.*, p. 39, table 6.

This disagreement which one finds in use of the Bible may be found also in basic doctrinal statements. Here one finds that there is a wide range of difference concerning statements which have been in the past a very central part of the Christian faith. The statements used here were as follows:

1. I believe that the virgin birth of Jesus was a biological miracle.
2. I accept Jesus' physical resurrection as an objective historical fact in the same sense that Lincoln's physical death was a historical fact.
3. I believe in a divine judgment after death where some shall be rewarded and others punished.
4. Hell does not refer to a special location after death, but to the experience of self-estrangement, guilt, and meaninglessness in this life.
5. I believe in the demonic as a personal power in the world.
6. Man by himself is incapable of anything but sin.[22]

The responses to these statements reveal the same kind of cleavage as previously mentioned, except that here one finds the Methodists rather than the Episcopalians as the least "orthodox." One finds a much lower percentage of Methodists in agreement with the tradition to which these statements point than Missouri Synod Lutherans. This group of Lutherans represent again the other end of the spectrum. Questions can be raised very rightly concerning whether or not agreement with these statements is in fact a good definition of orthodoxy. That there are significant variations concerning the response to the statements is clearly demonstrated, however, and it is most probable that a majority of Christians would agree that these statements do capture the direction of orthodoxy.

Thus, one finds a true difference, i.e. as true as one can reveal

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[22]*Ibid.,* pp. 44-47, tables 10-15.

by means of statistics, among the clergymen of these six denominations over basic biblical and theological issues. Not only does one find a difference here, but Hadden demonstrates also that younger clergy are likely to be somewhat less orthodox than older clergy, although all will remain in relatively the same place on the general theological continuum.[23]

b. *Description of the religious beliefs of laymen.* While Hadden establishes his point about the clergy, what may be stated about the laity? At this point, rather than drawing upon original research, Hadden points to the work of Sociologists Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark. These men, on several projects, made a study of laity which corresponds roughly to that of Hadden on the clergy.

One must again raise certain questions concerning methodology and content of the study. At this point it appears as though Glock and Stark deserve more criticism than Hadden. Their questions were more ambiguous. This means that two people who radically disagreed might have responded in the same way to the same statement, and yet understood different things by their responses. For example, Glock and Stark used the aforementioned statement, "there is life beyond death."[24] Hadden's somewhat comparable statement was, "I believe in a divine judgment after death where some shall be rewarded and others punished." As mentioned before two people could respond "completely true" to Glock

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[23]*Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

[24]Glock, *op. cit.*, p. 98, table 5-5.

and Stark's statement and yet understand by that response two completely different things. The Hadden Statement appears to leave little room for this possibility. Hence, one might not feel quite as comfortable with the exact outcome of the Glock and Stark study for methodological reasons. Since it is used here to note observable trends, however, the general impression is still quite useful.

In terms of the general trend the conclusion concerning the religious beliefs of laymen would be quite similar to that of Hadden concerning the clergy. This means that there is wide disagreement about matters of religious belief among laity from different denominations; not only do they disagree among denominations but also within denominations themselves. As Hadden states it: "Denominationalism is clearly a powerful force in influencing what people believe about Christian doctrine. But perhaps even more important is the fact that within denominations and even within individual congregations there is a significant degree of dissensus."[25]

The data which Glock and Stark collected on the laity is comparable to Hadden's study of clergy in that they also got the responses of people to a certain set of statements. Examples of these statements are as follows:

1. I believe that God really exists and I have no doubts about it.
2. Jesus is the Divine Son of God and I have no doubts about it.
3. Miracles actually happened just as the Bible says they did.
4. There is a life beyond death.[26]

Their goal was somewhat different from that of Hadden, though. One

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[25]Hadden, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.   [26]*Ibid.*, p. 63.

main question which they were trying to answer was whether in fact

there was an emerging consensus among members of the major protestant

denominations. As the two men rightly point out there seemed to be an

emerging feeling that the old differences were breaking down, e.g. adult

versus infant baptism, and that Christians were moving together at least

on the theological front.[27] This feeling had never been tested in

reality, and therefore Glock and Stark performed some needed ground-

breaking in their study. Their study showed that the feeling about

unity was nothing more than a feeling, and that some very large theo-

logical differences existed among members of the various denominations.

In response to statement 1 mentioned above, 41% of the Congregation-

alists stated "completely true," while 99% of the Southern Baptists

responded in a like manner.[28] When there is this large a difference on

such a basic theological issue, namely the existence or non-existence

of God, one quickly takes note. The response to all the other ques-

tions, including the remaining three above, showed even greater

differences than the response to the statement about the existence of

God. On question 2 there were only 40% of the "liberals" in agreement

with 99% of the Southern Baptists again in agreement. Question 3 found

just 28% of the liberal element responding positively, while 92% of the

conservative element assented. The fourth question gained a 30%

affirmative response on the part of liberals and a 97% affirmative

response on the part of the conservatives. Thus, one sees dramatic

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[27]Glock, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-89.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 91, table 5-1.

differences on the religious beliefs of laymen.

This study was broader than that of Hadden in that it included laymen from a significant number of additional denominational affiliations, plus "sects" and Roman Catholics. Hence, one has an even better idea as to the range in Christendom in the United States today. As was mentioned before the Glock and Stark study helps one to see not only that there are very real divisions today, but also where those divisions are, i.e. in terms of the crisis of belief. And because of this disagreement over belief questions Glock and Stark then point out that one must raise more seriously the question of the content and scope of the current ecumenical concern. Can there really be constructive dialogue in terms of union between churches which have a radically different understanding of what is and is not theologically important?[29] One might add the question, in light of the Glock and Stark study, "is there really a 'unity' in each church itself to begin with?"

The differences which Glock and Stark uncover are great enough to separate the denominations into five major general headings; liberal, moderate, conservative, fundamentalist, and Roman Catholic.[30] The groupings are based on the degree to which the denomination affirms traditional theological concepts, with the liberals being the least orthodox and the fundamentalists being the most orthodox. This

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[29]*Ibid.*, p. 110. Glock and Stark also raise here the question of how the liberal bodies stay united when their memberships disagree substantially among themselves. They point to such things as less doctrinal involvement, less concern about the church, and basic secular outlook on life as at least a partial answer.

[30]*Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

distinction, though general, helps to make a number of other observations, e.g. the relation of religious liberalism to involvement in current social issues. This will be discussed at a later point, however.

c. *Comparison of clergymen and laymen.* From the data thus far presented we have now a general idea of the relative positions of clergymen and laymen *vis-a-vis* religious belief. A comparison of the two is helpful before moving on, however. For this comparison we shall use a table of Hadden's which compares his own statistics on clergy with statistics on laity from the aforementioned study of Glock and Stark.[31] Some rather obvious conclusions can be gleaned from this table. First, one notes that the range of theological belief between denominations is similar among both clergy and laity. Second, laymen and ministers within any given denomination tend to have a similar viewpoint, and thus land on the same points on a liberal-fundamentalist continuum. Third, ministers tend to be a bit more liberal than laymen, although this is difficult to say with any degree of reliability with such limited data. Hence, in terms of the theological beliefs in themselves we find that ministers and laymen in each denomination are quite similar, but that the denominations differ considerably.

3. Ethical Component of the Problem

This, then, is the strictly theological component of Hadden's study. We next focus on what might be called the ethical component.

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[31]Hadden, *op. cit.*, p. 49, table 16.

TABLE 16

COMPARISON OF BELIEF STATEMENTS OF

LAITY AND CLERGY

	Methodist	Episcopalian	Presbyterian	American Baptist	American Lutheran	Missouri Synod Lutheran
VIRGIN BIRTH						
Laity:						
'Jesus was born of a virgin.'						
(% answering 'completely true')	34	39	57	69	66	92
Ministers:						
'I believe that the virgin birth of Jesus was a biological miracle.'						
(% answering 'definitely agree')	28	40	36	58	68	90
DEVIL						
Laity:						
'The devil actually exists.'						
(% answering 'completely true')	13	17	31	49	49	77
Ministers:						
'I believe in the demonic as a personal power in the world.'						
(% answering 'definitely agree')	21	38	30	49	66	78
EVIL NATURE OF MAN						
Laity:						
'Man cannot help doing evil.'						
(% answering 'completely true')	22	30	35	36	52	63
Ministers:						
'Man by himself is incapable of anything but sin.'						
(% answering 'definitely agree')	19	25	25	22	53	72

This title does not intend to imply that the two areas are easily separated. It is used rather to denote a shift in emphasis. We find ourselves led naturally into the ethical framework in that we find ourselves facing a kind of paradox. On the one hand, the ministers and laymen within any one denomination maintain rather similar religious beliefs, i.e. similar beliefs concerning basic theological orientation. On the other hand, however, we find the comments of Hadden and others which indicate that there is a serious struggle between the clergy and the laity again within any one given denomination over the nature and meaning of the church. So we find that we are forced to ask "why?" What are the underlying factors in this schism?

At this juncture we are thrown into the middle of a question involving the relation of theology and ethics. Given our theological posture, what are the implications of this for our stance on ethics? In terms of a more practical application, if for example we say we believe that the Christian Church should be a "church for others" what does this imply for our own involvement in local racial and poverty questions? Or on the other side, regardless of our theology, does the church as a corporate body have any right to become involved in polit- ical matters, to echo the comments cited earlier from *Christianity Today*? These questions plus many more are at the center of the problem to which we now turn our attention.

Regarding this issue Hadden generally presents a convincing argument, based upon his statistics, that whereas clergy generally are defining the implications of their faith in terms of some kind of attention towards involvement in social issues, e.g. civil rights, the

laity are taking another route. It appears as though the general laity are in one of several positions: either they understand the implications of the faith for ethics in a different way, i.e. in terms of non-involvement, or they don't understand the implications of the faith for ethics, or they don't see any necessary relation between the two, or they neither understand their faith or their ethics or aren't even interested in struggling with the issue. A presentation of the data from Hadden and Glock and Stark helps to answer this dilemma.

In terms of specific data, Hadden presents two different yet related types of data which help to establish and support his case. For both laymen and clergy he first examines the relationship between degree of orthodoxy and stance on general political beliefs, e.g. the party in which one is registered, the feelings which one has towards the free enterprise system, the role of government in business. Secondly, he looks at the way in which the clergy and laity view the civil rights issue, e.g. should ministers be involved in demonstrations, was Martin Luther King, Jr., making Christianity relevant, etc.

In reference to the relation between orthodoxy in religious beliefs and stance on general political beliefs, Hadden found that for the clergy there was a positive correlation. Those who were more orthodox tended to be politically more conservative, and conversely those who were less orthodox tended to be politically more liberal. In fact, Hadden's results showed that the more orthodox clergy (regardless of denomination) tended to be Republican, believe strongly in the free enterprise system as being the system most compatible with personal freedom and constitutional government, believe the government is

invading the sector of private enterprise, believe that the poverty-stricken were primarily responsible for their own situation, and supported Barry Goldwater. The more liberal clergymen were just about reversed in terms of their beliefs and actions.[32] As Hadden states his results: ". . . conservative religious views are associated with preference for the Republican party, that liberal theological views are associated with preference for the Democratic party. The data from this study further support the proposition that theological views and party preference are both reflections of an underlying ideology or world view."[33] Here one can agree with Hadden, but must hold in mind a question as to what the basis is for this underlying world-view or ideology. At least in the case of the clergy Hadden's own data would seem to support the idea that the basic ideology or world-view of the clergyman is a function of his theology, i.e. they are totally bound up in one another, with the theological perspective being the most important.

When Hadden examined the laity for this relationship between theology and ethics he got a different result. ". . .The existing evidence would seem to suggest that for laity, religious beliefs are held relatively independent of beliefs about social issues."[34] For this particular conclusion Hadden presents evidence from various sources; he also presents a rather slim amount of material on the basis of which to make such a judgment. One can nonetheless discern again a

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[32]*Ibid.*, pp. 73-83.   [33]*Ibid.*, p. 88.

[34]*Ibid.*, p. 90.

trend. Hadden first presents a table in which occupational status is related to denomination. Here, one finds that the liberal denominations have the larger numbers of professional and white collar members while the more conservative denominations have the larger percentage of their membership constituted by the blue-collar workers.[35] When this table is seen in light of a Gallup Poll comparing election trends in the 1960 presidential election, one finds that the professional and white-collar workers are more conservative while the blue-collar workers are more liberal in their voting patterns.[36] At this point, at least, it appears as though a liberal theology does not mean necessarily a liberal position in politics, as was the case for the clergy. Thus, one notes already a distinction between clergy and laity. The same thing holds true in a comparison with the other subjects, i.e. beliefs about the free enterprise system, government providing services which should be the realm of private enterprise, and the responsibility that people who live in poverty have for their own situation. Rather than using orthodoxy as the measure here the degree of biblical literalism was used. This roughly corresponds to orthodoxy, however, and thus they can be compared. We find, as is expected, that for the laity the degree of biblical literalism is independent of belief about politics; the respondents all answered similarly, i.e. conservatively, regardless of how literally or symbolically they interpreted the Bible.[37] One therefore finds himself confronted with a picture of the

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[35]*Ibid.*, p. 91.   [36]*Ibid.*, p. 92.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 95.

laity in which it appears as though their theological thinking or position has little or no effect upon their concern or non-concern for social issues. Whereas for the clergy theology and social/political thought were seen to be positively correlated, for the laity they seem to be completely independent of one another. It appears as though for the laity one might conclude that denominationalism is not a function of either theological or ethical orientation but rather of something else, e.g. social class.

The second way in which Hadden approached this question of the relationship between theology or religious beliefs and ethics was by means of studying one very specific area. By doing this he could much more easily ascertain the depth and definition of one's commitment. As mentioned previously Hadden chose the civil rights issue for his area of specific study. One could pick a number of issues and do a similar study, e.g. the war in Viet Nam, the conflict on the campuses, or the rising problem of drugs. Possibly the findings of any of these studies would correlate quite positively, i.e. would point out the degree to which one relates his theology and his ethics, whether layman or clergyman. One therefore approaches the results of Hadden's study of the civil rights question with a great deal of interest.

Taking as a basis the results which have been discussed one would assume that on the specific issue of involvement in the civil rights movement liberal clergymen would be in agreement with the general goals and thrust of the movement, while conservative clergymen would remain apart from the struggle. As a matter of fact Hadden shows this not to be the case. He rather establishes the somewhat surprising case

that clergymen in general react in a positive manner towards the civil

rights movement, i.e. are in general agreement with its goals, regard-

less of their denomination.[38] As Hadden himself states: ". . .perhaps

the most profound finding in our study is that whatever their theology,

clergy as a group are overwhelmingly sympathetic to the general prin-

ciple of achieving social justice for Negroes in America."[39] For a

clearer understanding of both the breadth and depth of this sympathy

one needs to take a closer look at this part of the study itself.

In terms of general statements the clergy responded to the

following:

1. I basically disapprove of the civil rights movement in America.
2. For the most part, the churches have been woefully inadequate
    in facing up to the civil rights issue.
3. Many whites pretend to be very Christian while in reality their
    racial attitudes demonstrate their lack of or misunderstanding
    of Christianity.[40]

To the first statement, only 6% responded that they agreed. Thus, one

already sees that a rather large majority is somewhat sympathetic to

the movement. The second statement found 73% of the clergy responding

that they agreed, and the third statement had 81% of the clergy in

agreement with it. The average percentages shown here were not the

result of large differences, and were in this sense not deceptive; the

largest percentage difference was 8 points for number 2.[41] Hence, one

does not find it hard to agree with Hadden's conclusion concerning the

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[38]*Ibid.*, p. 159.   [39]*Ibid.*, p. 104.

[40]*Ibid.*, pp. 104-106, tables 39, 40, 41.

[41]*Ibid.*, p. 105, table 40. Interestingly enough the percentage
difference here was not between the most liberal and most conservative

general commitment of clergy to the civil rights movement; the state-
ments which he used seemed to be quite fair indicators of this commit-
ment. Also, one begins to take note of points of possible tension, as
brought out by statements number 2 and 3. Here it appears as though
the clergy were saying that the churches, i.e. clergy *and* laity, didn't
take their Christianity seriously enough in reference to the civil
rights struggle. This is saying among other things that the majority
of clergy believe that theology and ethics ought to be related, and
that the clergy believe further that these two things generally are
not related.

When we turn to more specific statements which demand an even
more unorthodox approach to the civil rights movement, i.e. perhaps
including active involvement in demonstrating and protesting, we find
a broader area of disagreement. In Hadden's understanding this is a
result of both age and theological orientation, i.e. on the liberal to
fundamentalist continuum. In a mid-range of questions, in questions
between general and specific, one finds more disagreement. For example,
to a statement which read "Negroes could solve many of their own prob-
lems if they were not so irresponsible and carefree about life," over
one-fifth of the clergy responded that they agreed.[42] When one gets
even more specific, e.g. "I am in basic sympathy with Northern ministers

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churches as might have been expected. The church with the highest
percentage agreement was the moderate American Baptist Church. True
to form the lowest amount of agreement was with the most conservative
church studied, the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church.

[42]*Ibid.*, p. 108, table 42.

and students who have gone to the South to work for civil rights," one finds one-third of the clergy in disagreement.[43] While this does show an increasing disagreement among the clergy to the statements as they become more and more specific, the important thing to remember is that two-thirds of them still agree. Two-thirds of the clergy still see a direct link between the church and socio-political issues.

After having shown the denominational reaction to these issues, Hadden broke it down further and looked to see if both age and relative theological stance were related to the stance which one finally took on the theology/ethics relationship question. In brief, he found that these two factors did relate positively. The older and more theologically conservative one was, regardless of denomination, the less in sympathy he was with the civil rights movement.[44] Hadden's conclusion was not that age and theological stance were equally important, however. He determined rather that the theological position appeared to be more important than age, in fact, approximately twice as important. Hence, there would be a much greater chance that an older Missouri Synod Lutheran would be sympathetic to the civil rights movement than a Methodist of the same age. If both were of the same theological bent, however, i.e. if both happened to be fundamentalists, then chances would be good that both would be unsympathetic to the movement.

In terms of specific examples of situations in which clergymen actually involved themselves in the civil rights struggle, perhaps identifying themselves with the cause openly by marching or joining a

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[43]*Ibid.*, p. 109, table 43.   [44]*Ibid.*, pp. 110-118.

committee, Hadden cited a number of examples. As he studied the question of actual involvement of clergy, he came to the conclusion that, ". . . the extent of clergy involvement in social protest is much greater than is generally believed."[45] He stated that clergy participation is often camouflaged for one reason or another and in various ways. For example, some ministers participate anonymously, or at other times a minister goes unnoticed in a demonstration, i.e. he is not highly visible and has no peculiar physical attributes which would make him so.[46] Another subtle yet important question which Hadden raises in this regard is what is it that constitutes involvement? Is the man who carries the picket sign any more "involved" than the man who speaks about the issue time and again from the pulpit?[47]

In one study which Hadden treated at length, a 1964 civil rights crisis in the Cleveland schools, he found first of all that a large number of clergymen did in fact involve themselves openly. Secondly, however, his statistics indicate that the amount of participation varied greatly from denomination to denomination, with a high of 86% of the United Church of Christ ministers participating and a low of 16% of the Lutheran ministers participating. In terms of an average almost exactly one-half of the clergy from all the churches involved themselves in the crisis. And of those clergymen who did participate, a number of them paid for it with their jobs and/or even their professions.[48] This kind of result is not an isolated instance; one can find

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[45]*Ibid.*, p. 120.

[47]*Ibid.*, p. 121.

[46]*Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

[48]*Ibid.*, pp. 122-126.

the same kind of thing repeated in situation after situation. And according to Hadden's projection, an increasing number of clergymen are becoming involved at points of social concern.[49] Thus, one is led to see that clergymen in general relate their theology to ethics and usually this means involving themselves in particular issues. And the number of clergy who are doing this is growing annually. The importance of this is brought into perspective when one compares the clergy involvement in civil rights with that of laymen. Here one finds the real focus of tension which was pointed towards at the onset of this chapter.

In reference to laymen Hadden first establishes that their frequency of church attendance is irrelevant to their opinion towards the civil rights movement.[50] A national average of 44% of the laymen questioned disapproved of the movement, and this average included responses from those who attended church weekly to those who never attended. When one compares this 44% to the 6% of the clergy who answered in the same manner, one realizes that a difference definitely does exist between the clergy and laity not only on the general level, but now also on the specific level.

The same kind of statistic is produced by Hadden in reference to the relationship between strength of religious belief ("very strong" to

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[49]*Ibid.*, p. 221.

[50]*Ibid.*, p. 127. As a side note, the people who reported that they never attended church were the most sympathetic to the civil rights movement.

"not strong") and attitude towards integration.[51] The "very strong"
religious believers don't differ significantly from the "not strong" in
terms of being more pro- or anti-integration. Thus, both church
attendance and strength of religious belief don't seem to have any
effect upon the way in which the layman views civil rights.

When looking at the dichotomy between reactions to general and
specific statements on the part of the layman one is left with more
questions. While on the very general level they endorse the "right"
principles, on the specific level these principles don't seem to func-
tion. Hence, one finds 86% of the laity nationally agreeing on the
general principles that "the best mark of a person's religiousness is
the degree of his concern for others," and 82% agreeing that "clergymen
have a responsibility to speak out as the moral conscience of this
nation."[52] When these general themes are made more specific, however,
one finds a large difference. Only 49% of the laymen actually agree
that clergymen should speak out on social issues, and 72% feel that
clergy who demonstrate do harm to the cause they support; this same
72% would be upset if it were their clergyman who happened to be
speaking out on the issues.[53] One begins to wonder if the laity have
even given any serious thought to their faith, or to the whole idea that
the way one lives has something to do with one's basic beliefs about
religion and society. Indeed, one begins to question the consistency

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[51]*Ibid.*, p. 129.

[52]*Ibid.*, p. 132, tables 52 and 53.

[53]*Ibid.*, pp. 134-136, tables 54, 55, 56.

with which they think.

When Hadden directly compares clergy and laity he reveals the large differences which do exist. In comparison to the 64% of the clergy who supported northern ministers and clergy going into the south to work for civil rights one finds only 37% of the laity.[54] A much wider gap exists between clergy and laity in reference to the statement that Negroes should take better advantage of the opportunities which they do have rather than protesting; here one finds 86% of the laity in agreement, and only 35% of the clergy.[55]

D. SUMMARY

In summarizing the data presented here one can begin making some preliminary observations. There does in fact appear to be a difference between laity and clergy regarding the connection between theology and ethics. Overall, we find that the religious faith and beliefs of clergy-men have a direct bearing on their stance towards ethics. When discussing specifically the civil rights struggle one finds a definite majority of clergymen in sympathy with it. All of these conclusions, as might be expected, could say several things. One must be careful not to make them say what he might want the outcome to be. For example, although one can legitimately say that the clergy generally supports the civil rights struggle, what does this really mean? Does it mean that each clergyman who supports the struggle is actively engaged in it? And what can be meant by "actively engaged?" Does one have to

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[54]*Ibid.*, p. 139.   [55]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

picket, demonstrate, or be jailed in order to be described in this manner, or is preaching with the aim of commitment to social justice also a kind of activism? Also, one could not hope to determine from the outcome of the studies of Hadden and Glock and Stark exactly what it is, in specific terms, that the clergymen want done *vis-a-vis* the civil rights movement. The determination of this would demand an elaborate and complex procedure of investigation.

A second set of questions also presents itself when one attempts to deal with the foregoing statistics. What does it mean for a clergy-man to say that he is basically in sympathy with the civil rights move-ment if this statement is nothing more than a statement? If one's outward behavior and priorities do not seem to be in any way affected by one's sympathetic statements towards the civil rights movement, what do the statements really signify? Are the clergy who might fall into this category significantly different from the laity who do not connect theology and ethics? Thus, one finds that he must ask, even of the clergy who react positively regarding social action, how seriously and in what kinds of terms each one takes the relation between his faith and his ethics.

And what about the laymen? What kinds of statements can be set forth about them? Thus far, we have seen that the laymen seem to see little connection between their faith statements and their ethical statements. What they say they believe and what they say they would do in a given social setting seem to be set apart from one another. In psychological terms one might suggest that their thinking at this point is highly compartmentalized.

Actually, there are a number of other questions which one would want to ask concerning the laymen. How seriously do they take the idea that each man is a theologian? Do they realize that the lives they lead demonstrate an explicit ethic regardless of what they might profess? It seems a fairly probable assumption here that most laymen have not given these questions serious attention. Perhaps it is because the clergy are "professional Christians," i.e. are paid to function full time thinking one way or another about Christian ideas, they have a more clearly articulated theology and an ethical stance which in some way reflects this theology. Also, one cannot disregard the obvious educational difference between clergy and laity. In terms of the mainstream denominations which Hadden studied most all of them require an educated clergy. This normally means at least three years of theological training beyond the undergraduate degree work. It is no wonder that clergy and laity therefore find themselves at different points on these questions.

Thus, we find the dilemma can be described. Its main point is that clergymen and laymen are in basic disagreement about the nature and function of the church. This disagreement then contains multifarious implications. The two groups disagree about the relationship between theology and ethics, or to put it more concretely, the two groups disagree about such things as whether or not the church ought to be involved in politics. Given these disagreements, one then finds different patterns of behavior arising. The clergymen appear to be more "activistic," while the laymen appear to be more withdrawn.

Since the future of the church depends upon the resolution of this dilemma, however, we find ourselves brought to the point of asking the question of how a solution might be reached. While there might be many possible ways in which to answer the problem, we shall look at only one.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT

Although there are various ways in which the dilemma presented in the last chapter could be approached, it is possible to look at only one of these approaches in depth. This chapter will be, therefore, an attempt to present one way in which the current crisis in the churches can be met. The viability of this option rests both on whether or not this approach really solves the problems of the last chapter, and on whether or not the contents of this approach are in fact a meaningful and authentic way in which to deal with the Christian faith. With these questions in mind let us look at the outline of this approach, and the reasons for which this particular option was selected.

It appears to be clear from Hadden's study that the crux of the current crisis between clergy and laity is basically theological. The clergy and laity have different understandings of the meaning and purpose of their faith which directly affects their understandings of the relevance of the Christian faith for social concern, or more generally for ethics. To say that the basic problem is theological is not to say that all of the clergy have the same theological perspective; quite clearly they do not. A large majority of them do see their theological perspective as being directed related to ethical questions, however, and this stands in contradiction to the bulk of the laity. Hence, one can say that the problem is at least generally a theological one. From the point of view of the clergy data presented in the last chapter one could conclude that the Christian faith does contain also some clear

cut directives for involvement in social concerns as a response to the Gospel.

With this understanding in mind the present chapter will turn to an exploration of some important theological foundations for involvement. By discussing these foundations, and later linking them to a discussion of ethics, it is hoped that we might gain a broader perspective of the way in which the gap, about which we have spoken, might be bridged. The following discussion is therefore centered upon the theological background for involvement, or the theological reasons for an ethical perspective. It is expected that through this kind of discussion, one might be enabled to see his faith and its implications in a much broader perspective than before, and might be freed from the problems inherent in compartmentalization of faith or theology and ethics.

Realizing that there are various sets of theological foundations which might be utilized for the purposes of this discussion, we have chosen only one of these to explore in depth. The approach which has been chosen is centered primarily upon the perspective of one theologian, Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann's approach has been selected because it demonstrates a very creative attempt at relating the two areas of theology and ethics under the broader umbrella of the Christian faith. His approach is handled in such a way as to gain a hearing from both sides of the theological spectrum, i.e. orthodox and unorthodox. His approach also helps the Christian who is serious about attacking the problem at hand to gain some meaningful handles for understanding and meeting the problem.

Moltmann's basic approach is developed primarily in his book *Theology of Hope*. Although he discusses implications for ethics in this work, he deals with them at much greater depth in some of his books and articles.[1] One could write a complete work about Moltmann's theology alone. Since our main task is more specific than that, however, we shall deal essentially with those aspects of his thought which are most pertinent to the problem which has been set forth already. We shall first discuss the various components of this theological thought which undergird his ethical stance. This will be done by developing the theological foundations as Moltmann does, and then commenting critically upon them, i.e. reflecting upon how well they serve our immediate needs. The direct dealing with his ethical stance itself is the concern of the following chapter.

There are three main theological concepts upon which Moltmann bases his ethical stance: promise, resurrection, and eschatology, i.e. hope and the future. Each one of these categories is dependent upon the others, and their interrelationships must be kept in mind when dealing with each one separately. Because of their importance for the overall problem with which we are confronted, however, each one will be introduced in depth separately.

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[1] Cf. bibliography, noting especially Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution and the Future* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969).

A. PROMISE

Promise is the category which seems to be the basic foundation for Moltmann's theology. The concept of hope, for which he names his most important work, is very deeply rooted in his understanding of promise as a prior category. A number of reviewers of his main work have stated this well. Hans Frei says, "Moltmann's thesis is simple yet subtle: the Christian hope for the world is that of God's faithfulness to his own promise."[2] Taking this one step further James Hart states, "The crisis of modern man in terms of his uprootedness from stabilizing traditions and his institutionalization by technopolis are to be met by the realization that one lives in the horizon of a divine promise. The correlative of the promise, Christian Hope, enables man to be completely modern and also to be saved from the numbing forces of mass conformity. This is the thesis of Moltmann's book."[3] Noting the centrality of the concept of promise for Moltmann's position, then let us examine it fully, looking at it in terms of its origin, contents, meanings, and implications.

1. Derivation

In order to appreciate the full meaning and significance of the category of promise for the early Israelites one must first trace its

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[2] Hans Frei, "The Theology of Hope," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XXIII:3 (Spring, 1968), 267.

[3] James G. Hart, "The Theology of Hope," *Commonweal*, LXXXIX:1 (October 4, 1968), 36-37.

derivation.[4] It has been pointed out by some Old Testament scholars, including especially Victor Maag, that the religion of early Israel was basically syncretistic. It was composed primarily of the religion of a group of nomads and an agrarian religion of some Canaanite peasants. In this context "syncretism" is not meant to carry a negative connotation, but rather intends to convey the idea that two incompatible forms of faith existed in tension beside one another as the faith of a newly emerging people was struggling to be expressed.[5]

Maag claims that it was the nomadic component of the early Israelite people who brought the idea of promise with them into the new faith. Promise had been a basis for their entire view of existence. The other segment of early Israel had utilized a much more localized and cyclical understanding of God and life. For these latter people their God or gods were bound to one place and time. As Maag states: "Nomadic religion is a religion of promise. The nomad does not live within the cycle of seed-time and harvest, but in the world of migration. This inspiring, guiding, protecting God of nomads differs quite fundamentally in various aspects from the gods of the agrarian peoples. The gods of the nations are all locally bound. The transmigration God of the nomads, however, is not bound territorially and locally. He journeys along with them, is himself on the move."[6] Thus, what follows from this basic difference in orientation between the nomads and the

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[4]Refer here particularly to chapter II in the English edition of Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967), where he deals specifically with the concept of promise.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 96.   [6]*Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

agrarian people is a whole different understanding of existence. Rather than remaining in one place spatially and ideologically the nomadic understanding of existence was filled with movement and change. They had new possibilities constantly opening to them, and could begin to think in terms of a future, with goals and purposes and directions.[7]

The importance of sketching this background of the earliest component parts of the Israelite people becomes crucial to the idea of promise when one sees what emerged from the aforementioned syncretistic struggle. What is important is, ". . . the fact that the Israelite tribes took the wilderness God of promise with them from the wilderness along with the corresponding understanding of existence and the world, retained them in the land amid the totally new experiences of agrarian life, and endeavored to undergo and to master the new experiences in the land in the light of the God of promise."[8] Thus, the important point here is that the character of the primitive Israelite faith was finally grounded in the concept of promise. What finally emerged was a faith which was caught up in a movement initiated by a promise, and which continued to move to the fulfillment of the original promise.

Noting the centrality of the concept of promise for early Israel, one is driven to delve more deeply into its origins and meanings. On the one hand one must ask questions both about the source of the promise and the method or medium of its communication. On the other hand one must gain an understanding of the term in itself.

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[7]*Ibid.*, p. 97.

[8]*Ibid.*

2. Source and Medium

Concerning the source of the promise and the medium of its transmission one must turn to the meaning or understanding of God and revelation. Moltmann bases his understanding of God and revelation here upon the Old Testament texts themselves. As the texts present the development, God, or more correctly Yahweh, was originally experienced in terms of appearances. As opposed to the later Greek kinds of conceptualizations of God in ideal terms, which might have arisen more from a reflection upon "reality" or upon the "nature" or "essence" of things, the early Israelites experienced "real presence" of Yahweh at specific times in definite locations. They did not gain their understanding of Yahweh initially through reflection upon him, i.e. through some kind of abstract pondering about reality or the ground of its existence. Yahweh confronted them, or revealed himself to them, and it was through these self-disclosures that they gained their knowledge of him, and their concept of promise.

Actually, the phenomenon of "appearance" by a god to a group of people was not totally new to the people of the ancient near east. Revelation was a common religious experience for many people living in that part of the world at that time.[9] As Moltmann points out, "The land of oriental culture is full to the brim of such appearances through which places are sanctified to become places of the cultus. Stones, waters, trees, groves, mountains, etc., can become the bearers of hierophanies."[10] The epiphany events became central for the entire organization of life.[11] Whereas the usual life of a people might have

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[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.   [10] *Ibid.*, p. 98.   [11] *Ibid.*

been constantly threatened by various perils, e.g. alien cultures and peoples impinging upon their territories and ideas, the members of the epiphany religions were able to ground their continued existence upon a continual epiphany event of their god. "The threat to human existence from the forces of chaos and of annihilation is overcome through the epiphany of the eternal present."[12] Thus, the people who turned to these religions found a kind of continuous *status quo* existence, the only change actually being mere variation in terms of the cycle of seasons.

Over against this, however, stood the appearance of Yahweh to his people Israel. It is true that the appearances of Yahweh were stressed among his worshippers as were the appearances of other gods in other contemporary religions. This is where the similarity ended, however. ". . . For Israel the 'appearing' of God is immediately linked up with the uttering of a word of divine promise. Where Yahweh 'appears,' it is manifestly not in the first instance a question of cultivating the place and time of his appearance. The point of the appearances to particular men in particular situations lies in the promise. The promise, however, points away from the appearances in which it is uttered, into the as yet unrealized future which it announces. The point of the appearance then lies not in itself, but in the promise which becomes audible in it, and in the future to which it points."[13]

To support the idea that there was a shift in emphasis one need

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[12]*Ibid.*, p. 99.   [13]*Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

only turn to one of the early Old Testament texts itself. For example, the early appearance narrative found in Exodus chapter 3ff. presents this picture. This is the story of the appearance of Yahweh to Moses, and the commissioning of Moses by Yahweh to lead the captives out of Egypt. As the story unfolds one sees that the appearance itself is not the important factor of the story. The emphasis is rather upon the fact that Yahweh promises Moses a new future for his people, including freedom from captivity. Another important feature of this story is that it reveals something of the nature of Yahweh himself. It says that Yahweh is one who stands both behind and in front of his people. He stands behind them in the sense of supporting them and giving them confidence. He stands in front of them in terms of beckoning them into a new future, a new kind of existence. He reveals himself as one who promises, and one who supports his promise with his continued presence, not in the sense of static "eternal presence," but in the sense of a dynamic leading presence. As the story shows, the future is very much a part of his nature.

This text is representative of many early appearance texts of the Old Testament. Generalizing from this we can see that the appearance events of Yahweh, i.e. those events which fall under the general heading of revelation, were important for several reasons. Through this medium Yahweh said something about himself, about his people, and about the structure and meaning of existence. About himself Yahweh said that he was basically personal, i.e. interested in a particular group of people and their problems and possibilities. He said that he was interested in trust and continued relationship, as demonstrated by

his insistence upon promise and the movement in the future. He said that life had more meaning to it than being in bondage, i.e. that there was a better kind of life to be lived, which included being in a relationship with him. He said that history had a different structure than had been realized before. No longer was there a need to have a cyclical view of life, based upon crops and seasons, but rather there could be now an historical view of reality based upon or perceived in terms of a framework of time that was dynamic. It included a past, present, and future. Most importantly, one finds standing in the center of the appearances of Yahweh the concept or reality of promise, seen in terms of covenant with and election of a people. It was to be through the faithfulness of Yahweh to his promise, and the response to the promise by the Israelite people, that Yahweh was to be known. Revelation and promise were tied very closely together.

3. Content

Thus, if promise really is at the heart of the texts of the early Israelites, as Moltmann presents his understanding of them, then one may make several very important conclusions about God and the meaning of revelation:

> 1. God reveals himself as 'God where he shows himself as the same and is thus known as the same. . . . If the revelations of God are promises, then God 'himself' is revealed where he keeps covenant and faithfulness for ever (Ps. 146:6).
> 2. . . . The history of promise, i.e. the history initiated by promise and covenant and expected as a result of them, does reveal the faithfulness of God to the extent that in it he keeps faith with his promises and thereby remains true to himself. . . . God is not first known at the end of history, but in the midst of history while it is in the making, remains open and depends on the play of the promises. . . . Knowledge of God is then an anticipatory

knowledge of the future of God, a knowledge of the faithfulness of God which is upheld by the hopes that are called to life by his promises. . . . So knowledge of God cannot consist in a résumé of the language of completed facts.
3. The guarantee of the promise's congruity with reality lies in the credibility and faithfulness of him who gives it. . . . Hope's knowledge recalls the faithfulness of this God in history and antic-ipates the real fulfillment in a multitude of pre-conceptions, not to say realistic utopias--yet all this without prejudice to the freedom of the God who promises.[14]

This, then, is the one important factor contributing to an under-standing of the meaning and origin of promise for the early Israelites, and hence for our faith. The other important factor is the meaning of the term "promise" itself in relationship to the early Israelites and their understandings.

Moltmann sets forth seven theses or statements concerning the meaning of the term "promise," especially in relationship to the faith of early Israel:

1. A promise is a declaration which announces the coming of a reality that does not yet exist.
2. The promise binds man to the future and gives him a sense of history.
3. The history which is initiated and determined by promise does not consist in cyclic recurrence, but has a definite trend towards the promised and outstanding fulfillment.
4. If the word is a word of promise, then that means that this word has not yet found a reality congruous with it, but that on the con-trary it stands in contradiction to the reality open to experiences now and heretofore.
5. The word of promise therefore always creates an interval of ten-sion between the uttering and the redeeming of the promise. In so doing it provides man with a peculiar area of freedom to obey or disobey, to be hopeful or resigned.
6. . . . The fulfillments can very well contain an element of new-ness and surprise over against the promise as it was received.
7. The peculiar character of the Old Testament promises can be seen in the fact that the promises were not liquidated by the history of

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[14]*Ibid.*, pp. 116ff.

Israel--neither by disappointment nor by fulfillment--but that on
the contrary Israel's experience of history gave them a constantly
new and wider interpretation.[15]

These statements help us to understand the term "promise" in
much more depth. Through the idea of promise an entirely new percep-
tion of life was formed. The cyclical view of time or life was no
longer accepted. Past, present, and future could now be the framework
for man's understanding of time, with the emphasis upon the future.
The future was not totally void of meaning, i.e. was not merely a block
of "unknown" time that had not yet been. The future had meaning in its
relationship to the God of present and of the promise. Yahweh made a
covenant or promise with his people, and it was on the basis of this
bond that Israel could be willing to completely reorient itself. The
people could have a sense of trust, not because they had read a move-
ment towards a new future out of life, but because it had been revealed
to them personally by Yahweh. They were offered the new view, which
they could accept or reject, and were given the opportunity to break
out into a new framework of existence. It was true that they might not
have known exactly what this future held in store for them. They could
move into it with a sense of confidence, however, in light of their
understanding of the promise and the one who promised. One should not
think that early Israel sat back and thought over the various options
casually. They rather were challenged by a possibility of something
new ahead, and thus were drawn into this new perspective. As Moltmann
so aptly states this: "It is from promise that there arises that

[15]*Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

element of unrest which allows no coming to terms with a present that is unfulfilled. Under the guiding star of promise this reality is not experienced as a divinely stabilized cosmos, but as history in terms of moving on leaving things behind and striking out towards new horizons as yet unseen."[16]

4. Implications

With this understanding of the source of promise, the medium of its transmission to Israel, and the content of the term itself, it is possible to turn now to some of the general implications of the term for the early faith of Israel. While some of these have been mentioned already, a look at them more closely will help to clarify even more an understanding of the concept of promise for early Israel, and will help us to be able to see more clearly how it might function as a meaningful theological foundation from which to gain an ethical perspective.

The first important implication of the concept of promise for the early Israelites was that it brought forth the concept of history. They began to think in terms of past, present, and future rather than in terms of cycles.[17] This meant that they could begin to plan, to think constructively about a new kind of existence. They could now reflect upon the promise that Yahweh had given to them, and see what kind of progress was being made in terms of its fulfillment. As Moltmann puts it: "Beneath the star of the promise of God it becomes possible to experience reality as 'history.' The stage for what can

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[16]*Ibid.*, p. 102.   [17]*Ibid.*, p. 100.

be experienced, remembered and expected as 'history' is set and filled, revealed and fashioned, by promise."[18] This means that it is promise that initiates the understanding of history. Promise started the people in motion with an understanding which they had never had before.

With the onset of historical thinking comes a number of other important changes. The people for whom historical thought became meaningful were thus enabled to view other ideas such as change, development, growth, transformation, and process. They could see that they were part of an ongoing movement, not as helpless pawns, but as active participants. By being given the possibility of a new future, based on a promise in the past, they were enabled to view themselves in perspective. Thus, by reviewing the promise from time to time, along with an idea of fulfillment, they could evaluate their present position, which also took on more meaning.

This idea of process or transformation was a key factor in the new future which they could now think about meaningfully. Rather than having things happen for no reason, things happened in a kind of meaningful pattern or order. Events were linked together in a new way. Perhaps this new emphasis upon change and transformation was taken up by early Israel because the nomadic element of the people could understand it easily. They might have been able to think in terms of movement or change much more easily because of their whole life-style than the other more agrarian people could have. Whatever the reason, early Israel adopted a historical perspective, and began to think seriously

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[18]*Ibid.*, p. 106.

about the future of their people *vis-a-vis* Yahweh.

As a natural outgrowth of historical thinking, the Israelite people began to think also in terms of hope. The idea of a future which was in contrast with the present created a tension which helped urge them to move towards the future. The future always was at least one step ahead of the present, opening new vistas of experience and life. The tension that the future created with the present was therefore a very creative kind of tension. It was creative in that it helped the people to create new forms of existence by opening new possibilities. By seeing new possibilities people were enabled to think seriously about actualizing some of them. Hence, one finds movement forward with a sense of hope and expectancy to be a basic characteristic of the early Israelite people. There was hope and expectancy for the actualization of the potential which has been revealed by Yahweh.

Another implication of the concept of promise for the early Israelites was in the area of law. Moltmann points to the importance of the relationship between law and promise when he says: ". . . originally promise is combined with obedience, and obedience with a change of place and a change of existence. It is necessary to arise and go to the place to which the promise points, if one would have part in its fulfillment. Promise and command, the pointing of the goal and the pointing of the way, therefore belong immediately together."[19] Here it is clear that the "law" which became active was an action in response

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 120.

to the act of another, rather than a negative kind of "legalism."

Yahweh had made a covenant with his people, i.e. made a promise to his

people which was accepted by them; both sides had entered into the

process. This meant that the Israelite people acted in reference to

the terms of the promise by being obedient to the giver of the promise,

and to the direction in which it pointed.[20] As Moltmann says: "The

commandments of the covenant, which point our hopes in the promise to

the path of physical obedience, are nothing else but the ethical reverse

of the promise itself. The promised life here appears as the life that

is commanded. Hence the demands for obedience and the demands for hope

are alike related to that horizon which opens up before the present in

the light of the historic datum of the covenant, and which makes the

present the front-line for the onset of the promised new life."[21] Thus,

promise and the following of its terms and directions belonged inti-

mately together. If life-styles had to be changed or new patterns of

acting created in order to respond adequately to the promise, then the

change was necessary. The law and the promise, or the promise and the

command, or better yet the promise and the obedience to it went hand in

hand.

Another important implication of the concept of promise is the

rise of eschatological thinking. "Eschatology" in this context refers

to promises and expectations which are to become actualized in the

historical future, and which are universal in scope.[22] In eschatological

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[20]*Ibid.*, p. 121.   [21]*Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

[22]*Ibid.*, p. 125.

thinking the future is the dominant note, and the events of the past

and present are evaluated in terms of it.

In looking at the development of Old Testament thought, the

prophets demonstrated a strong emphasis upon eschatological thinking.

Founding their faith in the concept of promise, the prophets radical-

ized and universalized this concept for their contemporary setting.[23]

This meant that on the one hand they thought in terms of the early

promises of Yahweh to his people. They were part of the people to whom

Yahweh gave his promises, and thus found them keenly important. The

promises had created within them a sense of hope. On the other hand,

they recognized that they were in a new historical setting with some

new problems, and that the promises and hopes originally given had to

be made relevant for their own new setting. Thus, while the Exodus and

Sinai events were important, the promises of Yahweh had to be trans-

lated or transformed and transformed in the new situation.

The direct meaning of this was that they regarded ". . . the old

historic bases of salvation as null and void. The prophetic teaching

is only eschatological when the prophets expelled Israel from the

safety of the old saving actions and suddenly shifted the basis of

salvation to a future action of God."[24] They were able to universalize

the action of Yahweh by pointing to new ways in which he was working

through other people in judgment of Israel. This was spelled out by a

glance at the historical setting in which they found themselves. Alien

people were attacking Israel, and Israel was not having an easy life.[25]

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[23]*Ibid.*, p. 126.   [24]*Ibid.*, p. 128.   [25]*Ibid.*

The prophets also were able to radically reinterpret the original promises and ideas of fulfillment by reference to new appearances and visions of Yahweh, e.g. in the writings of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. New directions and evaluations could be formed still in close connection with Yahweh, but different from what were originally the case. This meant that there was an analogy between the old saving acts of Yahweh, and the old understanding of fulfillment, with newer understandings.[26] The thinking was not completely analogous, however, because the new understanding of Yahweh's movement was much broader in perspective, being universal in terms of its geographical and ideological appeal. It now confronted all nations and all ideologies.

The content of the new promise had to do with overcoming the negativities of existence at that time, as the people moved into the future.[27] Thus, such things as social justice were important. The overcoming of hunger, poverty, polytheism, and other things of human concern were also judged as negatives by the prophets, and were important areas of concern. The final negative item with which they were confronted, however, was death. In the end Yahweh remained the God of the living, and therefore death was a form of judgment. Only the overcoming of a God-forsaken death could remedy this situation. And this problem remained as such, i.e. it remained a block to "salvation," except in the realm of hope and perhaps expectancy.[28]

Thus, one sees that "promise" functioned as a dominant category

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[26]*Ibid.*, p. 129.   [27]*Ibid.*, pp. 130ff.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 132.

for the early Israelite faith, and in fact remained of central importance through the growth of the faith. It served as a backdrop for other concepts in that it was at the foundational point of all of them. It was even finally through a development in the understanding of God's promise and the fulfillment of it that the Christian faith arose. The dominant category for the rise of that faith, resurrection, was a direct outgrowth of the prior concept of promise. And it is to this category of resurrection that we now turn our attention.

B. RESURRECTION

So far we have seen that "promise" functioned as a key category for the Israelite understanding of their faith. Though the original promise and the initial understandings of its fulfillment changed as the Israelites grew and developed, the importance of promise remained nonetheless central. As we traced some of the development and implications of promise, we noted that finally the prophets found themselves confronting a situation for which they had no answer--death. Actually, the prophets dwelt on a number of themes. Social injustice, the lack of concern for others and for God, and many other problems were very much in the center of their discussions. The kind of death that came at the end of life, however, remained a real problem. Death meant here separation from God, and it appeared as though there was finally no answer to this problem. Death loomed as an ultimate block between man and final union or continued relationship with God. With this perspective on the background of the situation during the time of the prophets and into the time of those who followed them, the importance of the

concept of resurrection may be seen. We now turn our attention to this as the second of the three theological categories from which Moltmann develops his ethical position.

In turning to the concept of "resurrection" we find ourselves moving also in terms of the Bible. Our main material thus shifts from the pages of the Old Testament to the pages of the New Testament. No longer do we look at "promise" or theological perspective from the point of view of the Israelite faith, but now we move more into the Christian faith. To be sure, we recognize our heritage from the earlier faith; it is upon that foundation that the new faith or understanding is built. Since the concept of "resurrection" especially in reference to Jesus is central to the difference between Christianity and Judaism, however, we do find a development, growth, and/or shift in understanding.

For Moltmann, "resurrection" is a highly significant category. Over one-fourth of his entire *Theology of Hope* is devoted to discussing it from various perspectives. Realizing that this is the case, we thus begin to shape questions and directions for looking at this concept. One can examine the concept of resurrection in Christianity by asking three major questions. First, to what does the term "resurrection" refer, especially in the thought of Moltmann? Second, did the resurrection of Jesus from the dead really happen? Third, what is the meaning and significance of "resurrection" for the Christian faith, i.e. in reference to its past, present, and future?

1. Content

The first question with which we are confronted is a question of

content. What is the content of the term "resurrection," as it is used

as one foundation of Moltmann's theological position? Moltmann's posi-

tion here is in basic agreement with the position of many biblical

scholars today. In discussing "resurrection" he refers to what

happened to Jesus of Nazareth after his death. He is not discussing

it in a general sense, for the major part of his treatment. He states

that what actually happened between the experiences of the crucifixion

and burial of Jesus and then his Easter appearances is unknown to us.

The New Testament witnesses do not clarify it. Nowhere in the New

Testament canon is the actual process of the raising of Jesus described

in any manner.[29] "Yet this event that took place between the two

experiences of the cross of Jesus and his living appearance was already

very early described as 'raising from the dead.'"[30]

The use of this idea of "raising from the dead" is very impor-

tant, and arose out of apocalyptic promises and hopes. Actually, the

term in the New Testament context had the understanding of not only

judging what had happened to Jesus, but also it contained an eschato-

logical hope about the future.[31] Further, the use of this idea

indicated that an attempt was made by the early witnesses to understand

what happened to Jesus, and to account for the mutually contradictory

experiences of death (cross) and life (resurrection).

The importance of the attempt to deal with these radically

contradictory experiences cannot be overemphasized. On the one hand

the disciples were confronted with Jesus who was crucified and died on

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[29]*Ibid.*, p. 197.   [30]*Ibid.*   [31]*Ibid.*

a cross. This fact had tremendous implications, especially in reference to an understanding of death as we have seen in the prophets. The death of Jesus meant foremost that the man who had lived his whole life for God, carrying the message of God's nearness throughout the land, was now totally abandoned by God. One need only look at the last words of Jesus on the cross before dying to catch the feeling of this total abandonment; "'E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach'tha'ni?' which means, 'My God, my God; what hast thou forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34.)[32] The idea of being forsaken by God in death was still a common idea during the time of Jesus, but magnified greatly in his life. Thus, the disciples were confronted with God forsaking Jesus.

On the other hand, the disciples were confronted with the appearances of the risen Christ, who through self-identification made it known that he was the same Jesus who had been crucified. This meant that although by his appearances in and of themselves the witnesses did not always recognize the crucified Jesus (now risen Christ), through his sayings the risen Christ made this continuity or "sameness" known.[33] This is not to say that the crucified Jesus and the risen Lord were exactly the same; it is saying, however, that there was an identity which arose out of the tension or dialectic between cross and resurrection. There did exist some kind of continuity between the earthly Jesus and the Lord who spoke at Easter.[34] The disciples at Easter did

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[32]Jürgen Moltmann, *Perspektiven der Theologie* (Mainz: Matthais-Grünewald, 1968), p. 40.

[33]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, pp. 198-199.

[34]*Ibid.*, p. 200.

not see a new heavenly being speaking to them; rather they were con-
fronted by the being who died on the cross, and then appeared as the
risen Lord.

Thus, the disciples were faced with the dilemma of explaining
the two radically contradictory experiences. In order to explain them,
and the identity of the risen Lord which became evident, the disciples
argued, ". . . for the event in between as an eschatological event for
which the verifying analogy is as yet only in prospect and is still to
come."[35] The category which fit this understanding, from within their
tradition, was that of "raising from the dead" or "resurrection." This
does not intend to convey the impression that "resurrection" was only
a convenient category for expressing some kind of common idea or
feeling, but rather underlines the importance of "resurrection" as
being that category which most accurately stated what for them really
had happened.

From this background one can begin to understand the content of
the term "resurrection." The question which still must be asked about
the content of the term, however, deals with the nature of the one who
was resurrected. Was Jesus resurrected physically, i.e. in the same
form as when he died on the cross? Was there some kind of spiritual
resurrection rather than a physical resurrection?

To these questions Moltmann develops a position which supports
neither the concept of physical or spiritual resurrection. According
to Moltmann, in evaluating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead one

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[35]*Ibid.*, p. 197.

must make an important distinction between *being* and *having*. In the case of Jesus what was raised after death was not the body which Jesus *had*, but the body which Jesus *was*. There was in this resurrection the raising of a loving self, identifiable with the self which existed prior to death, and yet different from either the previous corporeal body or the spirit. Thus, what was raised was really something new, i.e. it was a singularly unique event, and it showed the bringing to life out of real death a real loving self which was identifiable with that which existed prior to death.[36] This was not the kind of dualism which one found in Greek metaphysics between body and spirit, but something really new and different. It was preceived as an authentic triumph over the power of death. In brief, then, this is what was meant by the term "resurrection," and the implications were tremendous, as will be discussed later.

2. Facticity

Having described what Moltmann means by the term "resurrection" we turn to the second important question about it. Did the raising of Jesus from the dead really happen?

This question, as will be seen, is not answered easily. In raising this question one initially finds himself in the realm of history; he is asking an historical question, a question of whether or not an event actually took place in the course of man's historical development. The fact that this is an "historical" kind of question

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[36]Moltmann, *Religion*, pp. 49ff.

is quite important for the kind of answer which might be given, for it might presuppose a certain understanding of history which could limit the kinds of answers which might be given otherwise.[37] There could be other related problems involved here also. What kind of an understanding of "history," or "fact," or "event," or "reality" did the people have who wrote the gospels? Is man's understanding today of these terms the same as theirs, and if not, what does this do to the "facticity" of the "facts" which they report?

The first problem which we thus face deals with the meaning and understanding of history. When one asks the question "did the resurrection really happen," with the usual modern historical understanding of that question, he presupposes a certain understanding of what is "historically possible." He is asking whether or not resurrection was possible in the time of Jesus, and answers this question on the basis of whether it is possible now. In this regard it should be noted that the concepts of the historical, the historically possible, and the historically probable, in the sense in which they are used today, were developed relatively recently, and that these concepts are based on experiences of history other than the experience of raising Jesus from the dead.[38] In a very real sense one can say that when one asks this question in the framework of reality of the modern historian, he has his basis in an a-theistic view of reality; in this view of reality the idea of God is not in any way a necessary or even relevant

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[37]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope,* p. 173.

[38]*Ibid.,* p. 174.

category.[39] The approach of modern history deals *only* with the natural, not the supernatural.

This has obvious implications for an understanding of whether or not the resurrection "really" happened. The presuppositions of today's history have an anthropocentric character; history is man's history, man being the subject of history. This means that what is historically possible does not entail or include what is divinely possible.[40] The divinely possible is not a relevant category for modern history. Thus, with this view of reality in mind, it is not difficult to see that the assertion of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God is to the modern historian an "historically" impossible and therefore "historically" meaningless statement.[41]

Within the context of the modern historian's understanding of history, however, one can still carry out an enquiry into the limits and degrees of probability with which the "actual" facts and "actual" course of events of the resurrection can be ascertained. And although this brings one to the obvious "historical" limitations, it does two other important things. On the one hand it can neither lead to a fundamental historical skepticism of the resurrection nor a fundamental proof of it; on the other hand, it provides important "checks" on

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[39]*Ibid.*, p. 167. This point which Moltmann makes could and would be called into question by a number of historians. They might argue, among many approaches, that the non-necessity of God in their approaches to history would not make their approaches therefore a-theistic. God, or the idea of God, might be a very real part of their presuppositional framework.

[40]*Ibid.*, p. 173.   [41]*Ibid.*, p. 174.

theology, primarily not allowing it to postulate "historical" facts on dogmatic grounds, but also not allowing it to abandon the ground of history in complete despair.[42]

Since we are living in the age of the "modern historian" which has been described thus far, it is important to note what the character is of the modern approach to history which would not allow it either to have God as necessary, or to prove or disprove the resurrection. It is against the background of this modern understanding of history that we put forth our original question about whether or not the resurrection really happened.

Generally speaking, modern historical writing, thinking, and research are approached in an analogical manner. This means that a modern historian differentiates between the real and nonreal in all ages by means of analogy with his own life, situation, and experience. This, of course, assumes some sort of common human nature and common human experience, which makes it both possible and meaningful to say what "really" happened in an earlier stage of life is the same as what can and does really "happen" today.

With this analogical view of history one meets obvious difficulty in reference to the resurrection. What "really" happened to Jesus, as reported by the witnesses, does not fall into any category of human events which one sees happening today. The witnesses reporting the resurrection had a different outlook on the experience and significance of history than that maintained currently. If something totally new

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[42]*Ibid.*

happened, for which they had no verifying analogy, they integrated it into their experience nonetheless. This is not necessarily the case with modern history, however.

Thus, what arises is a further question concerning the basic experience of history which comes to be the ground of one's understanding. If the modern historian and the biblical witnesses experience history differently, how can there be meaningful dialogue concerning the resurrection of Jesus? Can the modern historian speak meaningfully at all about the resurrection of Jesus in light of his historical presuppositions?[43] According to Moltmann there are at least three viable options to meeting this problem.

First, theology can grant that the report of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God is "unhistorical" and then seek other ways for the modern, historically determined man to "approach and appropriate the reality of the resurrection."[44] What usually is done in this approach in reference to the reality of the resurrection is a laying aside the question of the reality of the resurrection itself in favor of a concentration upon the element of the character of the witnesses themselves, and of their claim. There is an emphasis upon personal encounter, upon non-objectifiable experience, or upon an existential decision to which this Easter kerygma leads.[45] This position is one which is reflected in the writings of Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth, and others. From this viewpoint one is asked to make "the

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[43]*Ibid.*, pp. 175-177.   [44]*Ibid.*, p. 177.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 178.

leap from mediating, objectifying, historical knowledge to personal decision."[46]

In the case of Barth one moves from the category of myth or history to that of revelation. It is only through revelation that one can find meaning and significance for the resurrection of Jesus. This approach yields at least one major problem. Without a grounding in some sort of "historical" event, the message of the resurrection loses its impact. One cannot find any significant need either for proclamation or decision as a result of it.[47] Also, one might call into question the category of revelation taken alone as being a meaningful category for the "modern, historically determined man." Would the category of revelation be any more meaningful than that of resurrection for him? This is not to say that revelation would not necessarily be important, but that it should be seen in a much broader context.

In the case of Bultmann's understanding of the resurrection, one gets the impression that the disciples were only speaking of some kind of new self-understanding or self-awareness which they had; that they were not speaking of anything which existed apart from their subjective selves. The resurrection in this understanding was thus a communal subjective awareness that the man Jesus, who had died on the cross, was really more than just a man. His power and charisma and personality were then "resurrected" among them, through their thoughts. Against

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[46]*Ibid.*

[47]Karl Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1933), pp. 144-147.

this position, it seems that it is much more probable that the original witnesses, i.e. those people who lived during the time of this "resurrection" and who later reported about it, were speaking of a "fact" and an "event" whose reality lay for them outside their own consciousness and their own faith. They were not trying to relate only a new self-understanding, but were discussing something which for them *really* happened apart from their own subjective thoughts.[48] Would the kind of subjective awareness or understanding of which Bultmann speaks have been a probable consequence of behavior for those people who earlier denied this very person who now was claimed to have been raised from the dead? What triggered the response of the disciples?

A second way in which the problem of history may be approached is by trying to develop further historical methods which attempt to grasp the whole of history, in all its variety. Whereas the analogical approach views only the similar and common elements in life, this style of approaching history adds to this the accidentally and/or suddenly new, i.e. the dissimilar and individual. This approach could be perhaps best called either a comparative or contingent view of history, and allows for the possibility of dropping all of the presuppositions about history otherwise maintained. These presuppositions, in the comparative view of history, become themselves alterable and provisional.[49]

There are definite drawbacks to this position also, regarding the resurrection of Jesus. In a comparative view the resurrection

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[48]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 172.

[49]*Ibid*.

could be viewed as one interesting variation among many in the history;
it is like anything else which is accidentally or suddenly new. In
fact, one need not even relate himself to the concept of resurrection
to see such things as the "new" Christian emphasis upon the individual.
"The rediscovery of the category of the contingent does not in itself
necessarily involve the discovery of a theological category.[50]

In distinction to this comparative view Moltmann asserts that
the raising of Christ is not in the category of the accidentally new,
but the eschatologically new. It cannot be seen as one of many impor-
tant points in a continuum, but rather must be regarded as a "novuum
ultimum," both in reference to what has and is occurring, and what will
in the future take place.[51]

The only way in which the category of the contingent could relate
to the resurrection would be if all world history, including all that
is contingent and continuous, could be perceived in a contingent manner.
All would be then contingent upon God's acting, especially in the
resurrection of Christ.

Thus, is distinction to this contingent view of history, "the
resurrection of Christ does not mean a possibility altogether for the
world, for existence and for history. Only when the world can be under-
stood as contingent creation out of the freedom of God and 'ex nihilo'--
only on the basis of this 'contingentia mundi'--does the raising of
Christ become intelligible as 'nova creatio.'"[52] The resurrection of

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[50]*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

[51]*Ibid.*, p. 179.   [52]*Ibid.*

Christ means a new possibility *for* the entire world, for existence and for history; it does not mean a possibility *within* the world and its history.

A third approach to the problems presented by "history" is a theological view of history, or more specifically a resurrection view of history. One may find this in the writings of R. R. Niebuhr, and at least some variant of this position is adopted by Moltmann himself. Within this framework theology constructs its own concept of history, and its own views of the narrative of history on the basis of a theological and eschatological understanding of the "reality" of the resurrection.[53] A new understanding of history itself is utilized which is based on the presupposition of the raising of Christ from the dead. A way is then developed to speak "Christianly" about God, history, and nature; one doesn't speak "historically," in the modern usage of that term, about these areas.[54]

From this perspective the raising of Christ from the dead cannot be called "historic" because it took place in history, but rather it *makes* the history in which we can and must live. Within this context one thus doesn't concentrate upon the facticity of the resurrection, or even upon its content, but rather takes it as a totality into account. As the molder of history the resurrection therefore necessarily involved perspective, meaning, and significance, as well as facticity and content. This means that not only the past is remembered, but also a posture of orientation towards a future in hope is maintained. Hence, part of the

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[53]*Ibid.*, p. 180.   [54]*Ibid.*

"historical" nature of this perspective is that it discloses an eschatological future.[55]

This position conflicts with both the analogical and contingent views. It is wider than analogy allows, and posits a framework which is necessary rather than contingent. In one sense, however, it is also contingent, if by that is meant that all else is contingent upon it. In the usual sense of the term "contingent," however, it is obviously different.

There are some important problems with reference to this position which Moltmann himself points out. First, this point of reference, i.e. the resurrection of Jesus, must prove itself to be the real center of thought in distinction to other "history-making events."[56] The question which arises is thus, "is this assertion of the resurrection as the center of man's thought really universally binding?" This would be in obvious conflict with the "modern man's" view of history, and thus would have to be questioned seriously. Secondly, is this point of view really an escape into the ghetto of an esoteric church ideology?[57] This, of course, points to the ever present possibility of the "church's understanding" of the world being set over against "modern man's understanding" of the world, and in effect not referring to the world at all.

Even given these basic and important problems, Moltmann still maintains that this view is very important if not essential. The understanding of the church must not be relative to the understanding of

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[55]*Ibid.*, p. 181.   [56]*Ibid.*   [57]*Ibid.*, p. 182.

each age and each new concept of history. ". . . The Church--including theology--is neither the religion of this or that society, nor yet is it a sect."[58] This does not mean, however, that the church can only exist for believers, i.e. those who subscribe to this view of history, man, and world. The church must be always involved in the questions of mankind, especially as they relate to his view of reality. This means that there is not, within the church, any final understanding of the reality of the resurrection and its full meaning; it also means, however, that the church enters into this quest for understanding from a particular point of view (as does everyone else), namely, from that point of view in which the resurrection was, is, and will be, however, is a part of the quest in which all men are involved.

Thus, one finds that there are a myriad of questions and issues involved in determining whether or not the resurrection of Jesus from the dead "really" happened. In a very real sense the question as to the reality of the resurrection is an improper one because it almost of necessity limits if not presupposes the answer which might be given. In the context of the historian's view of history, at least in the analogical sense, one would have to say that this concept is meaning-less. In the theological view of history, however, one would see that it is the resurrection itself which makes history meaningful. And it is the latter position, in constant dialogue and development, which Moltmann himself appears to maintain.

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[58]*Ibid.*

3. Meaning

The third and perhaps most important question to be considered is, "what is the meaning and significance of 'resurrection' for the Christian faith, i.e. in reference to its past, present, and future?" It is in answer to this question that one finds the way in which this category begins to function as a base for ethics.

Moltmann addresses himself to this question very specifically and devotes much of his writing on resurrection to developing pointers towards an answer:

> Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the resurrection. . . .A Christian faith that is not resurrection faith can . . . be called neither Christian nor faith. It is the knowledge of the risen Lord and the confession to him who raised him that form the basis on which the memory of the life, work, sufferings and death of Jesus is kept alive and presented in the gospels. It is the recognition of the risen Christ that gives rise to the church's recognition of its own commission in the mission to the nations. It is the remembrance of his resurrection that is the ground of the inclusive hope in the universal future of Christ.[59]

This statement presents in capsule form that which Moltmann in various writings develops at length. In trying to systematize his writings concerning these points one can find three major categories which he emphasizes as being important in reference to the meaning and significance of the resurrection. Briefly, one can say that this meaning lies in its speaking about God, about history, and about man and the Lordship of Christ.

In reference to God, the resurrection helps man to see what God is and does. It is really Jesus' cry from the cross which points one

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[59]*Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

to asking questions about the nature of God; it is the resurrection, however, which points one to an answering of these questions.[60] In Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, one sees the suffering and death of God. The old picture of the God who was related to his people and yet somehow removed became transformed in his humbling himself in the suffering on the cross.[61] As Moltmann says, through the cross and resurrection God becomes historically "paraphrased." He is no longer the "Wholly-Other" but the "Wholly-Changer."[62] This new understanding of God as the "Wholly-Changer" creates an entire change of perspective. With the resurrection comes an anticipation of complete world change. One becomes aware of the yet hidden arrival of the coming God, and the salvation of Creation through the one who was crucified.[63] In this resurrection one sees that God relates himself in a new way to his whole creation, i.e. in a very human and earthly way. He is a God who ultimately cares about *man*.[64]

A second major area in which the meaning of the resurrection lies is history. As discussed earlier the resurrection provides a new key to understanding history. The resurrection is not understood in terms of history, but it rather makes history.[65] This is not to say that it creates history or historical thinking, but that it makes historical thought take on a new importance and forces it to be

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[60]Moltmann, *Perspektiven*, p. 41.

[61]*Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.   [62]*Ibid.*, p. 41.

[63]*Ibid.*   [64]*Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

[65]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 212.

understood in a different way. In light of the resurrection one finds that the problem of death is met head-on; this has obvious implications for a new understanding of history. Death no longer is to be seen as the end of life, or the end of being. The resurrection underscores a triumph over death, and thus emphasizes that life finally comes again from what was dead, in a new form. Death is no longer to be seen as final forsakeness by God, because death is no longer seen as the end. Life becomes the end rather than death. Hence, one's historical perspective shifts as a result of the resurrection. The eschatological perspective began in the promise to the early Israelites is now carried even further to encompass even death. A totally new kind of future therefore becomes possible.

The meaning of man and the Lordship of Christ is the third area which helps to define the meaning of the resurrection. These two concerns must be seen together in order to understand the full meaning of either of them. In reference to the meaning of man, one finds that what one *is* takes on a radically new meaning. If in the resurrection of Jesus one finds that what he *was* as a person, i.e. a loving self, was raised to life after death, and if Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection were ways in which God was speaking to all men, then Jesus' resurrection serves as a paradigm for that which will happen to others. Thus, one finds ultimate importance placed on the self of man, i.e. what one is.

In light of the resurrection, one is also enabled to gain hope for some kind of life after death; life is no longer meaningless in the face of despair and death. Through this hope, one is empowered

to live his life in light of physical death with a vital sense of future, a sense of love, and non-concern for death. One can plunge into the problems of the present with faith in the future and a firm hope against death. Moltmann states it in the following manner:

> Today we perhaps should say that man finds himself again in the future, if he risks his life for a coming future that will not pass away. He will find himself again in the Kingdom of God, if he risks his life for the coming of this Kingdom, and if he takes his cross upon himself, as the Word of God would have him do. The resurrection hope readies one for a life in love without reserva-tion. Therefore we can say conversely that creative and self-giving love mirrors future resurrection under the conditions of this present life. The resurrection into life and freedom is here anticipated in the reverse movement of the incarnation, of self-oblation and faithful labor. Love, creating new life out of nothing, is resurrection in this life. Not the *corpse* that we can dissect objectively, but the *body* with which we identify in love, stands in the horizon of the resurrection hope. There is no meaningful hope for the body we *have*, but only for the body we *are*. In love we break through the deadly category of having and arrive at the category of affirmed being. Herein alone lies resurrection hope in accord with the Christian faith.[66]

Thus, in reference to the meaning and significance of resurrection for the meaning of man, Moltmann is clear.

Moltmann is also clear about the meaning of the Lordship of Christ. The meaning of the Lordship of Christ lies in the obedience of man to God by means of entering into a full participation in all of life's problems in the spirit of Christ. One becomes in a very real sense obedient to Christ by living a life in the style of Christ, which includes participating in the struggles of mankind and trying to under-stand the way in which God is working in and through man.

Actually, in this facet of understanding of the resurrection one

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[66]Moltmann, *Religion*, p. 58.

is confronted with two pictures. On the one hand one sees that God's justice is becoming evident, i.e. in the raising of Jesus from the dead one finds life triumphing over death. On the other hand, however, as one looks around the world he sees that God's justice does not seem to reign at all times in all places. Thus, in order to make the justice of God the predominant theme or description of life, man finds himself drawn into participation with Christ in the fight against the "demonic powers." In obedience to Christ, by inclination rather than legality, the man who responds positively to the resurrection of Jesus participates in the bringing into being the Kingdom of God.[67]

In trying to spell out the meaning of the Lordship of Christ in detail one finds again a very radical call. The call is not simply to accept the fact that in Christ death has been overcome. Rather, one finds that in the overcoming of death in the resurrection there is the call to help in the struggle against injustice, enslavement, anxiety, etc. To turn again to categorization, one finds that Moltmann sees the reaction of man to the resurrection of Christ going in two directions, mission and evangelism. In the words of Moltmann: "Es gibt keinen anderen Zugang zur Erkenntnis Gettes im Kreuz des Auferstandenen als die konkrete Teilnahme an der in Wort und Glauben gegenwärtigen Kraft des Geistes."[68]

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[67]Moltmann, *Perspektiven*, p. 51.

[68]*Ibid.*, p. 50. Personal translation--There is no other access to the understanding of God in the cross of the resurrected one than the concrete participation in the power of the spirit which is present in word and faith.

In reference to mission one must participate thoroughly in the day-to-day struggles of men. Poverty, hunger, world-population explosion, air-pollution, and many other contemporary problems would be seen as being integral areas of mission. It is through the struggles against the modern evils or demons that one helps to usher in the kingdom of God.

But mission alone, i.e. acts which are a direct response to the gospel but which don't necessarily involve the proclamation of it, are not enough. One must also participate in evangelism; one is called to proclaim to others what God has done in Christ, i.e. especially in the cross and resurrection. One thus proclaims both what God has done, and also what God is doing and will do. One proclaims the new possibilities for life and existence, for history, and for the future which have been opened to man through Christ. Thus, the future is an essential part of the proclamation of Christ.

As Moltmann develops his position, the resurrection fulfilled the promises of the past, and pointed to a new future. In a very real way the resurrection is not just an event which took place in the past, but is also an event which has meaning in reference to the whole of history, i.e. past, present and future. The potential for overcoming the "demonic powers" has been actualized in Christ's resurrection. Thus, the actualization was and is to be seen in terms of a dialectical process, with the work of man being a very important part of this ongoing process in creative tension between "what is" and "what is to be."

Moltmann summarizes his own understanding of the importance of mission and evangelism as very appropriate responses to the resurrection of Christ in the following words: "If this event of the raising of Jesus can be rightly understood only in conjunction with his universal eschatological future, then the only mode of communication appropriate to this event must be missionary proclamation to all peoples without distinction—a mission which knows itself in the service of the promised future of this event. Only missionary proclamation does justice to the historical and eschatological character of this event."[69]

This, then, is a development of some important features of "resurrection" in order to understand how it might function as a key theological category for ethical thinking. As one readily sees, dealing with the resurrection brings one face to face with another very important category—the future. It is to this which we now turn our attention.

C. ESCHATOLOGY

Thus far we have examined the two categories of promise and resurrection. We have looked at both of them in some detail, and have been given some clues as to how they relate to one another. We saw first of all how the concept of promise developed and functioned as a key category for the growing Israelite faith. Secondly, however, we saw that in the face of the many facets of death the old understanding

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[69]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope,* p. 212.

of promise was not enough; it had to be enlarged and renewed. Thus, the concept of resurrection began to evolve. When resurrection then became a reality in Jesus, as opposed to just a fragment of conceptual abstract thought, there arose a real feeling of triumph of life over the power of death. There arose a renewed hope for the future. In light of the original promise, then, tempered with the resurrection faith, the Christian was enabled to live in the midst of chaos and death with faith in the future. The future therefore arose as a very important category of theological thought for the early Christians.

The concept of future functioned for the early Christians in two interrelated ways. First, it was an important theological precept, *per se*. Second, as a basic theological category, it was an undergirding theory for ethical action. Both in the discussion about promise and in that about resurrection we saw that the future functioned to lead men into acting in the present. With this in mind, it seems appropriate that this category is discussed as the last of the three foundational theological categories; it provides a good bridge into the whole field of contemporary ethical action which proceeds from a theological framework.

When we use "future" here we are really referring to two other important concepts: "eschatology" and "hope." These three terms function together as different parts of the same general thrust or direction; they help us to think of this direction from various perspectives. In order to approach the meaning of these categories for the Christian faith in a systematic manner, let us utilize an approach similar to that used with the concept of resurrection. We shall ask

three important questions. First, what is the content of the terms

"eschatology," "hope," and the "future" as they are used by Moltmann?

Second, what is the place and function of these concepts in the develop-

ment of the Christian faith? Third, what is the meaning and signifi-

cance of these terms for the Christian faith?

1. Content

First of all we concentrate upon definition. How does Moltmann

use these three terms? What do they include? Moltmann links the

definition of these terms together in this manner: "Eschatology is

. . . the *doctrine of hope,* the doctrine of the future for which one

can hope, and simultaneously the doctrine of the action of hope which

brings the hoped-for future into the sufferings of the present age."[70]

In this statement one sees that the three terms are integrally bound up

in the description of a movement forward, and help to describe the

movement psychologically, historically, and theologically.

The psychological component of the movement forward is "hope."

Psychologically, "hope" is the impetus for movement; it is also the

impetus for participation in the present which leads forward. It is

hope which drives men on, and which allows them to work within seemingly

intolerable conditions.

The historical component of the movement forward is "future."

"Future" denotes the "not-yet" of time; it points to that time which is

ahead of the "already been" and the "now." The future can also be seen

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[70]Moltmann, *Religion,* p. 202.

in terms of the unrealized dream or goal to which hope leads. It still
is an historical category in that it remains the not-yet, a point ahead
in time and space.

The most important term of the three, as Moltmann discusses
them, is "eschatology." "Eschatology" is the theological component,
and as such acts as the background in reference to which the other terms
take on their meaning and significance in the religious context. In
the religious context one thus talks about having an "eschatological
perspective" rather than just being "future-oriented." Since the term
is so important, let us look more closely at its general definition.

Originally "eschatology" referred to a "doctrine of the end" or
a "doctrine of the last things."[71] "By these last things were meant
events which will one day break upon man, history and the world at the
end of time. They included the return of Christ in universal glory,
the judgment of the world and the consummation of the kingdom, the
general resurrection of the dead and the new creation of all things.
These end events were to break into this world from somewhere beyond
history, and to put an end to the history in which all things here live
and move."[72] With the event of the resurrection, however, and the
reinterpretation of the promise, Moltmann feels that there had to be a
new understanding of "eschatology." It had to be described in terms of
the essentially dynamic nature of the new Christian experience. Thus,
Moltmann views the newer understanding of the term in the following
manner:

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[71]Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 15.   [72]*Ibid.*

> In actual fact, however, eschatology means the doctrine of the
> Christian hope, which embraces both the object hoped for and also
> the hope inspired by it. From first to last, and not merely in
> epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking
> and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and trans-
> forming the present. The eschatological is not one element of
> Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the
> key in which everything in it is set, the glow that suffuses every-
> thing here in the dawn of an expected new day. For Christian faith
> lives from the raising of the crucified Christ, and strains after
> the promises of the universal future of Christ. Eschatology is the
> passionate suffering and passionate longing kindled by the Messiah.
> Hence eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian
> doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of
> all Christian proclamation, of Christian existence and of the whole
> church.[73]

From this statement, then, one can see that Moltmann views "eschatology"

as the most basic of the three terms discussed in this context. As a

foundation for a theological stance it is extremely important.

This, then, is a surface definition of the three terms. Their

full meanings will be brought out in the answers to the two additional

questions. Before pursuing those answers, however, it should be noted

that Moltmann uses the term "eschatology" somewhat hesitantly. He

feels that the term is a misnomer, i.e. that it doesn't really express

the desired meaning. The term is a misnomer, from his understanding,

because *logos* (eschato-logy) from the Greek perspective refers to a

"reality which is there, now and always, and is given true expression

in the word appropriate to it. In this sense there can be no *logos* of

the future, unless the future is the continuation or regular recurrence

of the present."[74] By "eschatology" Moltmann does not want to imply a

static state of affairs; he rather wants to bring to expression a very

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[73]*Ibid.*, p. 16.   [74]*Ibid.*, p. 17.

dynamic movement into the future. By this term he wants to denote something which is really new, something which always stands in contradiction to that which is. This really new something must not be thought of in terms of reality which is eternal and exists over against that which now is, but something which is always developing, always changing, and always calling that which now is into question. This "eschatology" of which Moltmann constantly speaks implies a new possibility or new possibilities which oppose that which already is in any given present of time. Though this "eschatology" is rooted in past events, i.e. in the promises of God and the resurrection of Jesus, it refers to a whole framework of existence which is a developing not-yet, one in which there might be constantly broader understandings of such things as justice, equality, and freedom for all men. These are not to be thought of in ideal terms, i.e. in the sense of Greek idealism, but rather in terms of development, movement, and change. "Eschatology" is thus to be viewed in the same way as the promises of God; it changes as man changes, but not necessarily as a function of man's change. Man can comprehend new futures only as he can attain new presents.

2. Function

The second question to be answered concerns the place and function of these three terms and concepts in the development of the Christian faith. How important was an eschatological view of man and history for the early Christians? Did future and hope play key roles in their perceptions of life?

As has been pointed to in the discussions about promise and

resurrection, Moltmann is of the opinion that an eschatological view of man and history was central for the early Christians. He thus finds himself accepting a theological position about the importance of eschatology which has been emerging since the late nineteenth century, originally through such men as Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer.[75] The breakthrough to this position made by Weiss and Schweitzer was picked up and extended later by Karl Barth, and it is out of a reaction to Barth's position, and variations on that, that Moltmann gains his perspective.

After having acknowledged his debt to Barth for emphasizing the centrality of eschatology for understanding the perspective of the early Christian community, Moltmann proceeds to point out where Barth misinterpreted its original meaning. Essentially, Moltmann feels that Barth had a static view of eschatology, i.e. the basically Greek view which has already been discussed. As Moltmann evaluates Barth, he feels that Barth was referring to a "transcendental present of eternity," when he was discussing eschatology, and thus was referring to a basically nondynamic view of something which existed apart from man and then broke into his world.[76] As stated earlier Moltmann rejects this idea of a static *logos*, and feels that it obscures the real intention of an eschatological view. The eschatologies of the early Christians and that of the Israelites, as Moltmann views them, were not based on something which was eternally the same, but rather on something which was constantly in movement. Their eschatologies, if one must use that

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[75]*Ibid.*, pp. 39ff.   [76]*Ibid.*

term, were based on *promise*, i.e. they were based on something which continued to lead them from the "now" into the "not-yet."[77] "It was not in the *logos* of the epiphany of the eternal present, but in the hope-giving word of promise that Israel found God's truth."[78] Thus, as is clearly evident, Moltmann feels that eschatology, based upon *promise* rather than *logos*, was a basic orientation for the Israelite and early Christian perceptions of life.

Given that "eschatology" described the orientation to life maintained by the early Christians, one thus can see that "future" and "hope" were also central. With an eschatological orientation based upon promise, it was hope which drove the early Christians into constantly new futures, and conversely it was the idea of new futures which contradicted the present which in turn created new hopes within them. There was a very real creative tension at work in the relationship between hope and future.

In reference to the early Christians there is another important aspect for understanding the origin of hope, and that is "resurrection." As discussed earlier it was the resurrection of Jesus, perceived as the triumph of life over death, which gave men the possibility of hope for a new future. Based upon this experience, new futures and thus new hopes were given a chance to arise in the minds of the early Christians. And in that the resurrection was seen to be a new understanding or development on the original theme of promise, all of these terms and categories were seen as working together, i.e. as being deeply

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[77]*Ibid.*, pp. 40ff.   [78]*Ibid.*

interrelated. This, then, provides us with an understanding of the basic place and function of eschatology, hope, and the future for the early Christians. The deeper meanings and significance of the terms is the concern of the third question.

3. Meaning

Specifically, the third question is, "what is the meaning and significance of these three terms and concepts for the Christian faith, both past and present?" Exactly how do they fit into a foundation of one's theology, and how do they relate themselves to ethical questions?

There are obviously a number of ways in which one could approach an answer to this question. One could deal primarily with the way in which they functioned originally, or one could just emphasize their present importance and role. Moltmann seems to do a bit of both. Since he does, and since we are attempting to follow this theological foundation, we shall look at both the past and the present. We shall do this by seeing eschatology (which shall include the concepts of future and hope) in reference to three different categories. These categories are history, revelation, and mission. By looking at these categories we should be able to gain a perspective on the way in which the three terms under discussion here were used in the past, and are to be used in the present and future.

a. *History*. The first area of concern is the relationship of eschatology to history. It has been pointed out already that the early Christians, indeed also the Israelites, perceived the future as a very important if not dominant category of time. For the early Israelites

we saw that it was the promise of a new future which moved them out of their given situations. As their understanding of life and of the original promise developed, the idea of fulfillment in the future shifted also. The Israelites were a people led by the future. We saw that the same thing was true for the early Christians. Whereas there had developed an apparent blockage standing between the people and an ultimate relationship with their God, i.e. death, there evolved a concept which came to be coupled to a reality that broke through that blockage, i.e. the resurrection of Jesus. There was opened for the early Christians an entirely new future, a future which arose from the surprise and shock of the resurrection. Thus, the future and a whole eschatological perspective became the dominant mode of thinking for the early Christians.

As Moltmann looks at the relationship between eschatology and history in more recent times, he notes that in the context of thought about history, i.e. historiography, the future has become an increasingly important category, i.e. both for those inside and outside of the Christian perspective. For much of the time between early Christianity and the present, eschatology and an eschatological perspective had receded into the background; they became relatively insignificant. In more recent times, however, they have become increasingly important, not only to people within the Christian faith. Whereas within the Christian framework one might talk of eschatology or the future in terms of the Kingdom of God, outside this framework one now might talk of some kind of utopian dream. Either one of these concepts refers to a beyond, a not-yet which stands in front of man, and in terms of which

one evaluates the present. Thus, one might criticize the way in which

men act today on the basis of a Marxian utopianism, for example, and be

just as strongly future-oriented as if he had evaluated that society on

the basis of a Christian understanding of a Kingdom of God. He would

thus have a kind of "political messianism" or "social messianism."[79]

From Moltmann's analysis of this development in historical thought he

sees this future-orientation as becoming almost a dominant note or

characteristic of all historical thinking. Kant, Shiller, Hegel, and

others all looked towards a not-yet, and evaluated the past and present

in reference to the future; many of those who have followed them have

done the same.[80]

This new future-orientation in secular history has done the same

kind of thing for the people who have adopted it as did the concept of

promise for the Israelites. It has given them a motivation to act in

the present, i.e. a goal towards which to move. And really it is not

just the future which has become important. The concept of hope has

also emerged as an important area of consideration for a secular as

well as a sacred view of history.

One implication of this, i.e. that hope is perceived as an

important area of concern, may be seen in the way in which one evaluates

the past. In order to understand people who have lived in any partic-

ular time previously one now looks at their hopes and the ways in which

they understood the future. "Past ages will . . . have to be under-

stood from the standpoint of their hopes. They were not the background

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[79]*Ibid.*, p. 235. [80]*Ibid.*, pp. 261ff.

of the now existing present, but were themselves the present and the front-line towards the future. It is the open future that gives us a common front with earlier ages and a certain contemporaneity, which makes it possible to enter into discussion with them, to criticize and accept them."[81] This is important because with future and hope being a common point of concern for modern Christians and non-Christians, it becomes increasingly possible for "modern man" to understand the whole Christian framework. A Christian understanding of man and history is now more meaningful to secular man.

Although both inside and outside of Christianity history and eschatology have become closely related, there is an important difference between the non-Christian and Christian approaches to the future. As Moltmann says: "The problem of history in the 'modern age' is presented . . . in terms of the difference between a scientific and technical millenarianism, which seeks the end of history in history, on the one hand, and, on the other, an eschatology of history, which arises from the event of promise in the resurrection, and for which the 'end of history,' in the 'modern age' can no more be the promised and expected end than the 'modern age' (Neuzeit) itself can be the 'new age' (neue Zeit) in the apocalyptic sense--as this expression (Neuzeit) was surely meant to be."[82] There is a different understanding of what that end of history is to be, and the way in which it is to come about. In the understanding of Christian eschatology it is not just through the labors of man that this end of history will be realized, although

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[81]*Ibid.*, p. 269.　　　　[82]*Ibid.*, p. 94.

these are important; the God of the promise, who revealed himself in a dynamically new way in the cross and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, is also involved in a significant way to bring about this new future.

b. *Revelation*. A second area of consideration in trying to find the meaning and significance of eschatology in the past and present is in the relationship between eschatology and revelation. From Moltmann's perspective revelation becomes most meaningful when viewed in an eschatological perspective. "The Christian doctrine of God--as an answer to the proofs of God or to the proof of his non-provability--nor to anthropology--as an answer to the question of God as asked by man and given along with the questionableness of human existence. It must be eschatologically understood, namely, in the field of the promise and expectation of the future of the truth."[83] From the Christian perspective one finds that there are a number of important issues involved in the relationship between eschatology and revelation, not the least of which are promise, Jesus Christ, death and resurrection.

Promise is the undergirding assumption in terms of which the other points take on significance. As presented earlier, God revealed himself initially to his people through promise. Men gained a sense of history, of future, through God's promise. Also, the past, present, and future of man were shown to be more dynamic categories from which to view life than from a cyclical perspective.

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[83]*Ibid.*, p. 43.

As the relationship of the Israelites with their God developed, this promise, and the ideas of its fulfillment, took on new forms. They were both renewed and transformed as new situations occurred and demanded change. In the light of change, God showed himself continually to be faithful to his promise, and to his people.

The faithfulness of God to his promises was most dramatically revealed for the Christian in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Through this event a whole new perspective on the future of man was also revealed. God's promise had announced originally the coming of a not yet existent reality. The resurrection, however, put life, put flesh and blood, into that announcement.[84] It pointed out some important things about the present and the future, in reference to Jesus and man in general.

The resurrection first pointed out what Jesus really *was;* it highlighted his life and works. Secondly, however, the resurrection served to point out what Jesus would be. This was perhaps best expressed in the various messianic titles which grew out of reaction to the event of cross and resurrection, i.e. to the Christ event. As Moltmann describes this: "Christian theology speaks of 'revelation,' when on the ground of the Easter appearances of the risen Lord it perceives and proclaims the identity of the risen one with the crucified one. Jesus is recognized in the Easter appearances as what he really *was.* That is the ground of faith's 'historical' remembrance of the life and work, claims and sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth. But the

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[84]*Ibid.,* pp. 84ff.

messianic titles, in which this identity of Jesus in cross and resurrec-
tion is claimed and described, all anticipate at the same time the not
yet apparent future of the risen Lord. This means that the Easter
appearances and revelations of the risen Lord are manifestly understood
as foretaste and promise of his still future glory and lordship. Jesus
is recognized in the Easter appearances as what he really *will be*."[85]

Thus, we find that the resurrection of Jesus radicalized the
whole eschatological perspective. It gave men a very vital, dynamic
view of the possibility of the future, a future which now included life
conquering death. More than that, it gave men reason both to look
hopefully toward the future, and to become involved in a very deep way
in the present. Again, Moltmann's words are helpful:

> The witnesses of Easter do not recognize the risen Lord in a blaze
> of heavenly, supra-worldly eternity, but in the foretaste and dawn
> of his eschatological future for the world. They do not regard him
> as the one who has been 'immortalized,' but as the one who 'is to
> come.' They saw him not as what he is in timeless eternity, but as
> what he will be in his coming lordship. We can therefore say: the
> risen Lord encounters us as the living Lord, inasmuch as he is in
> motion, on the march towards his goal. . . . The appearances of
> the risen Lord were recognized as the promise and anticipation of
> a really outstanding future. Because in these appearances a process
> was manifestly perceptible, they provoked testimony and mission.
> The future of the risen Lord is accordingly here present in promise;
> it is accepted in a hope that is prepared to suffer, and it is
> grasped by the critical mind that reflects on men and things in
> hope.[86]

Hence, through the resurrection of Jesus the revelation of God came to
be expressed in dynamically new terms. The idea of the future was not
new; that had been given with the first promise to the early Israelites.
The faithfulness to his promise was not new; God had shown himself to

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[85]*Ibid.*

[86]*Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

be faithful in many previous situations. What was new, however, was the content of the future. Not only was God faithful to his promise until death, he now overcame death. He also brought new hopes to expression: reconciliation between man and God; forgiveness of sins and abolition of godlessness; salvation, which was now to be understood in terms of the individual (salvation of the soul, individual rescue from the evil world, comfort for the troubled conscience) and the group (hope of justice, humanizing of man, socializing of humanity, peace for all creation).[87] All of this was shown through the raising of one man, Jesus, from the dead; he was the one for all.

We therefore see that the relationship between eschatology and revelation is not only important, but expresses much of the heart of the faith. Through revelation this eschatological dimension of the Christian faith is made known to man; the whole new perspective on life, which holds the future constantly in contradiction with the present and forces men to always reevaluate their present goals and situations, has been expressed to man by God through his promise and faithfulness to it.

c. *Mission.* The third area of consideration to understand the meaning and significance of eschatology is the relationship between eschatology and mission. It is this relationship which flows directly out of the revelation of God, and which speaks about man's responsibility for and reaction to that revelation.

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[87]*Ibid.,* p. 329.

We have seen that the revelation of God, through his promises and faithfulness to them, has shown to man a new style of life, and new possibilities. These have been described as contradicting the present. The new future of man presented through Christ has been described as always changing, i.e. it is always one-step ahead of wherever man is in his "present." Thus, one finds this revelation pointing to a future which is open-ended; it is not a completed process or an eternal presence.[88]

If revelation is the promise of this kind of open-ended future, with a hope based centrally upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, ". . . then it has to be related to the process which is brought about by missionary enterprise. The process of witness to the eschatological hope by those who in each succeeding present have to answer for their hope, the apostolate which involves the world of the nations in this process, and the exodus from the present of a self-contained existence into the promised future--these are the things that constitute the history which 'corresponds' to this kind of revelation, because it is called to life by this revelation. Awareness of history is awareness of mission, and the knowledge of history is a transformatory knowledge."[89]

With this understanding of the appropriateness of responding to this kind of revelation through mission, one is led to ask questions about the nature of this mission. What is meant by mission in this context? Do we mean a proclamation of this new future? Are we talking

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[88]*Ibid.*, p. 88.   [89]*Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

about political and/or social action which attempts to draw us into this future? Just what do we mean?

At this point Moltmann's understanding of the missionary response appropriate to the Christian faith may be seen in two perspectives: missionary proclamation of the meaning of the promises of God and the importance of faith and hope in them, and historic transformation of life.

Involved in the first response is the call to infect others with hope.[90] This means a preaching of the word of hope, of love, of salvation for all people. It means helping people to see the tremendous possibilities for life in light of this new and transformed eschatological perspective. It means helping people to see the kind of life which has been brought into the world through the Christ event.

This "kindling of hope" is a job for all Christians. As Moltmann states: "It is the task of the whole body of Christians, not merely the task of particular officials. The whole body of Christians is engaged in the apostolate of hope for the world and finds therein its essence—namely that which makes it the Church of God. It is not in itself the salvation of the world, so that the 'churchifying' of the world would mean the latter's salvation, but it serves the coming salvation of the world and is like an arrow sent out into the world to point to the future."[91] Thus, one finds the importance of enabling others to see the dynamic nature of this faith through its proclamation.

Secondly, one finds that mission involves a real attempt to

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[90]*Ibid.*, p. 328.   [91]*Ibid.*

transform the present, i.e. life as it now is. As a natural response

to the kind of eschatological outlook which has been described, one

finds that it is impossible to comfort himself in the present situa-

tion. He rather is looking constantly to the future, the not-yet, and

trying to find ways in which to make it operative in the present. In

more theological terms, he accepts the call of obedience to the Lord-

ship of Christ, and follows this in action in his own context.

The ways in which one makes this Lordship of Christ operative

in his present situation are manifold. Initially, one takes seriously

the fact that his faith stands over against the world as it now is, and

thus refuses to rest or become comfortable in the present. Put in

other terms, one takes seriously the "call" to his Christian vocation.

". . . The call to discipleship of Christ is not aimed at faithful and

loving fulfillment of our calling under the prescribed conditions--

whatever the God or the forces prescribing them. On the contrary, this

call has its own goal. It is the call to join in working for the king-

dom of God that is to come. . . . The *call* according to the New

Testament is once for all, irrevocable and immutable, and has its

eschatological goal in the hope to which God calls us."[92]

Hence, what is being emphasized is the idea that one puts as

first priority his faith, i.e. his call to be a disciple of Christ.

One does not allow the various roles or calls which his society places

upon him to be the final determinants of how he leads his life. In

trying to evaluate the kinds of demands which his society places upon

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[92]*Ibid.*, p. 333.

him, then, the Christian does not examine them, ". . . in regard to whether and how they fully occupy his own self or estrange him from himself, but in regard to whether and how far they afford possibilities for the incarnation of faith, for the concretion of hope, and for earthly, historic correspondence with the hoped-for and promised kingdom of God and of freedom. The criterion for the choice of a calling, for changing our calling, for spare-time activities, as well as for the acceptance and shaping of the process of socialization, is constituted solely by the mission of Christian hope."[93]

What Moltmann is thus calling for is a reiteration of much of the New Testament. He is calling for the Christian to be self-conscious of his faith, to risk his life for others, and to attempt to work for the future in the present. He is calling for the kind of response to the love of God in Christ which puts the highest priority upon loving *all* men. "Love," in this context, thus means changing the structures which de-humanize men, impoverish them, hold them in bondage, and do not allow them to know the meaning of peace. To love people here means that one must expend himself to change these conditions. "The social institutions, roles and functions are means on the way to . . . self-expending. They have therefore to be shaped creatively by love, in order that men may live together in them more justly, more humanely, more peacefully, and in mutual recognition of their human dignity and freedom."[94]

In the paragraph which closes his main work, Moltmann summarizes

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[93]*Ibid.*, p. 334.   [94]*Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

well what he means by being involved in mission as a response to the

gospel:

> . . . The hope of resurrection must bring about a new understanding
> of the world. This world is not the heaven of self-realization, as
> it was said to be in Idealism. This world is not the hell of self-
> estrangement, as it is said to be in romanticist and existentialist
> writing. The world is not yet finished, but is understood as
> engaged in history. It is therefore the world of possibilities,
> the world in which we can serve the future, promised truth and
> righteousness and peace. This is an age of diaspora, of sowing in
> hope, of self-surrender and sacrifice, for it is an age which
> stands within the horizon of a new future. Thus self-expenditure
> in this world, day-to-day love in hope, becomes possible and
> becomes human within that horizon of expectation which transcends
> this world. The glory of self-realization and the misery of self-
> estrangement alike arise from hopelessness in a world of lost
> horizons. To disclose to it the horizon of the future of the
> crucified Christ is the task of the Christian Church.[95]

One thus sees that mission and eschatology are quite closely related;

one relates his whole understanding of this future-oriented Christian

faith through his mission to others.

D. SUMMARY

Through the course of this chapter we have attempted to develop

as fully as possible three theological concepts which can serve both as

the basis for our understanding of the Christian faith, and as the

basis for our ethical action. The three concepts, promise, resurrec-

tion, and eschatology, were shown to be strongly interrelated.

From the presentation of these three concepts together, one can

begin to see many important theological reasons for ethical action.

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[95]*Ibid.*, p. 338. The question of whether or not Moltmann has
really raised compelling reasons for involvement in mission as a result
of theological thinking is raised in the next chapter.

The early Israelites didn't just listen to the promise of God and agree to it; they also acted on it in their own lives. Though their responses changed from situation to situation, the importance of response was constantly underscored. One need only look to the prophets to find the Word of God being spoken to those who either failed to respond to God's promise, or responded in the wrong way. Indeed, the importance of social action and justice may be traced throughout many of the writings of the Old Testament.

The resurrection of Jesus also called forth a response. The early witnesses felt *compelled* to share with others this new and profound revelation of God. Again, as with the promise of God their responses varied. On the one hand, one finds an emphasis upon the necessity of love and concern for others, regardless of their heritage. Social sensitivity, involvement, and concern flowed directly out of the resurrection faith.

In general, one could say that a primary response to this whole eschatological faith was ethical action in the *present*. One lived out his understanding of the future in the present situation. In a very real sense, one could say that for some of the early Christians the future was more important than the present, and that they allowed the future to determine the present. Thus, rather than just talking about the future of the resurrection, the Christians reflected the meaning of the resurrection in the present. They lost their lives in the present to gain their lives. They emptied themselves in and for the present in the hope of the future. A love that broke the bounds of egoistic involvement to complete concern for the other for his own

sake was a characteristic emphasis of their understanding of the faith.

Hence, we find ourselves with a theological foundation begun in promise, radically personalized and universalized in the resurrection, and characterized by an eschatological perspective. We find ourselves also with a dynamic and changing faith which calls us to proclaim it in word and deed, in statement and action. Thus, we find that we have truly a theological foundation for ethical Christian action. It is in a more detailed analysis of the ethical implications of this theological foundation that we must now immerse ourselves. This is the concern of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thus far we have developed two different themes. In the first chapter we saw the current plight of the churches, i.e. the gap which exists between clergy and laity concerning the connection between theological understanding and ethical acting. As one means of bridging the gap we suggested the possibility of examining some theological reasons or foundations for personal and social involvement. Thus, in the second chapter we looked closely at three important theological bases of the Christian faith which highlight the function of the churchman in his society. By reviewing Moltmann's foundational categories of promise, resurrection, and eschatology, we found some important theological reasons for involving ourselves. Overall, we found that each one of these themes provided in its own way the motivation for our involving ourselves in our present social setting. We saw that involvement was really a dominant characteristic and/or description of our Christian faith.

To emphasize the practical value of this study, this chapter will deal with more concrete aspects of ethical involvement. It will center on the implications for action which arise out of the kind of theological stance which has been presented. The way in which this will be done is by first looking at some general questions concerning ethical involvement as a response to our theology. After having dealt with these questions, we will look at the broad level of ethical involvement. Here there will be some discussion of the relationship of

the individual Christian to both national and international problems.
What we will do in this part is point out some of the major areas where
our faith must be applied, and look at the general implications of our
faith for the way in which we act in response to it.

From the discussion of the general level of involvement, we
will proceed to a discussion of the ethical implications of our theo-
logical stance for the local church. Here we will discuss some of the
problems which the individual Christian faces in his local community,
and how he as an individual Christian and as a representative of the
local church might respond to these problems. We will thus look at
the way in which our theological position helps and guides us in
answering the ethical questions which confront us in the local church.
This latter discussion will center on one local church situation,
pointing to the dynamics there. Hopefully, one can generalize from
this presentation to other situations.

On the basis of our handling of these questions it is hoped that
we will find some workable guidelines for future action. It is pre-
cisely at this point that the original gap between clergy and laity
arose, and therefore our dealing with this section is a straightforward
dealing with the primary problem.

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

The first question or set of questions which we address is,
"What makes action a necessary response to God's activities with us?"
Although it might at first appear as though this question has already
been answered it is pointing to a dimension which must be confronted

directly. This question is really asking whether or not a kind of "Christian fatalism" could not be the result of the theological foundation which has been presented. It is saying also that if God has continued to act on our behalf in the past, why should we concern *ourselves* about acting in the present? If action is necessary, won't God do it himself?

From Moltmann's perspective there is a direct answer to these questions. For him a Christian fatalism would be a highly improbable response for one to make if he had heard and understood the meaning and significance of the Christian message. One need only recall some of his statements about the importance of mission for the individual Christian to see this. Although Moltmann would agree that one might not *necessarily* involve himself in the problems of his community as a result of hearing and understanding the message, he would say that most likely one would feel deeply motivated to involve himself in the problems.[1] What is meant here is that if one really understood the eschatological thrust of the message, he would find hope kindled within himself. As a function of this hope in the future, he would become motivated to work in the present.

To put Moltmann's approach to answering this question into highly concrete terms one need only look at the rise of the black American. In the period of United States history when the black

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[1]"Motivated" was chosen rather than "compelled" so that the freedom of choice could be expressed. Though a kind of compulsion might be felt, if it were total compulsion one would not have the freedom to choose whether or not to respond, and how to respond; one could thus also use the term "moved."

American had little or no hope of change, i.e. no new future, he

retained a kind of pie-in-the-sky approach to the future. His future

was seen in terms of the afterlife, and had relatively few implications

for the present. As his hope became kindled, however, especially

through the rise of the civil rights movement and into the whole black

power thrust, he began to become much more actively involved in the

present. In other words, the more realistic the future became, i.e.

the more possible the future appeared, the more the black American

involved himself in the present. Through action which was nurtured

by hope in the future he began to attempt to actualize the future in

the present. This is what Moltmann would reply to the question of the

necessity of action as a response to our faith; necessary, no, but

probable, yes.[2]

With this understanding of the "why" or "whether" of action

and involvement, we raise the questions of "what" and "who." In what

are we supposed to involve ourselves? Do we involve ourselves as

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[2]The question could be raised as to whether or not the reasons
which have been given for involving oneself in action are not more
psychological than theological. While it is admitted that there is a
stronger emphasis upon the psychological factors for involvement, both
theological and psychological factors enter in. This is why so much
attention was given to relating the three theological categories of
promise, resurrection, and eschatology. One must keep in mind that
when one is talking about motivation, one must account for the human
factors which may be other than logical. While there may be a very
real sense of some kind of logic which pervades much of one's action,
there are dynamics and connections beyond this which operate in a
strong way to influence one's behavior. One need only read the work
which has been done on motivation in the field of psychology to gain
an appreciation of what is meant here. Moltmann has embodied both the
theological and psychological factors in his approach. Hence, it comes
out somewhat more confessional than apologetic.

individual Christians or as a group of Christians, i.e. as the institution--the Church? In what kind of situations does our faith motivate us to act?

The implications of Moltmann's theology are that an individual should work out his faith in action both as an individual, and as a part of a group, i.e. through and as the Church. This answer follows directly from the kind of emphasis which Moltmann places upon the importance of the macro-structures of the society, i.e. the institutions, upon the life of the individual.[3] The individual does not exist apart from the structure of the society in which he finds himself, and in fact, he can only express his individuality as far as his group allows. Thus, in order for the individual to be able to experience and express such theological virtues as complete concern for others he must make room for the expression of that through channels within his communal structures. For example, in our American society it would be difficult for an individual white Christian to convince a black American whom he had just met that he was truly concerned for the black Americans if his church was segregated, and participated in supporting segregation by the very fact that it did nothing to oppose it. The group is a vital part of the larger society, and exerts a definite amount of influence positively or negatively by its action or inaction as a group.

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[3]This is found throughout Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969).

B. PROBLEM AREAS

Given this kind of background for action, which states both that involvement is an integral part of the expression of our faith, and that this involvement comes both at the individual and group level, we can proceed into the main area of our discussion. The first large problem to be discussed regards questions of involvement on the macro-scale, i.e. in the national and international scene. The "problems" which one finds here are manifold. Moltmann points to three main areas of concern on the international level, and these are equally applicable on the national level. These three areas are economics, politics, and race.[4]

1. Economics

One need not look far to be confronted by the economic problems of man on the international level. The descriptive phrase which has become a cliché speaks loudly and clearly about the crux of the problem: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The rich one-third of the world, centered in the North Atlantic region and predominately in the United States, continues to accrue wealth at a rapid rate. This gain obviously has to come from someone's loss; it can't come out of no relationship to other people. Thus, the cynic might restate this phrase: the rich nations get richer *because* the poor nations get poorer. The rich get rich at the expense of the poor.

The problems which this economic disparity creates are obviously

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[4]*Ibid.,* pp. 37ff.

many. How can the richer nations expect the poorer ones to respond to them in a positive manner when the poor nations are being drained of their resources? How can nations like the United States expect developing nations such as Brazil to finally become developed and independent, i.e. relatively free from aid, when the United States demands that much of the "aid" funds which it gives Brazil be expended in purchasing American products? In this case the rich nation makes a mockery out of "aid"; it also hinders more than promotes the development away from dependence which is necessary for the poor nation.

But what are the specific outgrowths of economic disparity aside from bad relations between countries? Poverty, i.e. the lack of funds sufficient to provide for basic needs, breeds many ills. Actually, it is difficult in most cases to tell which part of the circle is the starting point. With poverty comes hunger. Hunger in turn can generate at least two kinds of activity: the hungry can look for food, or the hungry can starve to death. In either one of these forms of "activity" the person who is hungry is not able to think on any higher level. While his dominant concern is food, he can have little time for pondering religious questions, philosophical questions, or questions of political ideology. Only insofar as these questions finally help in gaining food do they become even possibilities for discussion.

Thus, one finds that with poverty and hunger one sees also illiteracy; there is a degree of impossibility of educational growth. Here the idea is not that literacy is not an innate possibility. Rather, what is being said is simply that with poverty and hunger the practical questions such as how to obtain food dominate the lion's

share of one's thinking time and processes; there is not much room left for abstract thought when one is confronted on the most basic level of survival.

Hence, we find a vicious circle, with three components already: poverty, hunger, and illiteracy. Poverty breeds hunger, hunger makes learning difficult; lack of education makes gainful employment difficult to secure, and hence supports poverty. The circle is therefore very hard to break.

Much of what can be stated about the world economic problems can also be stated about national economic problems. Within our nation we can see on a somewhat smaller scale the problem of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, at least in relative terms. We find inequities in our tax laws which allow millionaires to escape payment of taxes, whereas the lower income people are unable to find the same escapes. We find that we also have people who have difficulty getting their next meal, children who go hungry. We find with these people who have poverty problems additional problems of illiteracy, and unemployment. We find that we have the same kind of vicious circle at work in our own society which is at work on the international scale.

2. Politics

The same kind of dynamics that are at work in the national and international economic problems are at work in the field of politics. Actually, poverty and economic disparity are in many ways part of the root cause of the political problems of our world. Economic factors have helped in significant ways to cause some of the political

disruptions which one finds from place to place. There are other factors which enter into the political sphere and add to the problems which men face which are more than economic, however. Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to political unrest is the suppression or lack of freedom. Where one has a small ruling elite, which itself defines the boundaries for the masses, one finds a gross lack of freedom. When this is the case, various results may occur. For one thing, if the minority can keep the majority in a place of submission by economic, political, and/or military control, then the lack of freedom will continue to be the case. When there is a realistic vision of freedom on the part of the majority, however, regardless of how impotent that majority may seem, then there would be a possibility of some form of revolution, radical transformation, or overthrow. Chaos and perhaps liberation could result from a violent reaction to suppression.

Actually, the lack of individual and group freedom is expressed in many forms, which range from the lack of freedom to express oneself as one wishes about any given topic, to the lack of freedom to completely define one's own way of life, i.e. to completely set one's own values, standards, and goals according to individual desires. While a kind of complete anarchy would be one end of this spectrum, complete dictatorship or totalitarianism would be the other end. While neither end, i.e. anarchy or totalitarianism, would be desirable, the possibility of finding and establishing one's own end would be most important. What is thus being emphasized is not that groups want all the freedom they can get, with complete freedom from rules. Rather, the

various groups which find their freedom seriously restricted want the freedom to determine their own rules and standards. Freedom, then, or the lack of it, can be the cause of political unrest.

Often, questions of war and peace center on this very issue. In the recent Biafran struggle for independence, for example, one found a minority of people in Nigeria struggling to be free from the control of the government of that country. What one thus finds is a fight for freedom. Though many other issues are also involved, this one issue of freedom is at the heart of the whole thing.

Another international political problem deals with the whole thrust of nationalism. In this area of concern one finds a drive on the part of nations to extend their own understandings of life, goals, and values to other countries. In strong nationalism one finds a drive to be concerned primarily and often exclusively with the problems and solutions of one's own country; one either forgets or ignores the needs and ideas of people from other parts of the world. With strong nationalism might come additionally a drive to extend one's own boundaries. If one could no longer rule another country, as England did in the high moments of her imperial days, one could at least *control* other countries, i.e. persuade the smaller country's people to be favorable towards the larger country and its ideals. This really is part of what is involved in the current race to gain satellite countries. No longer is the question, "how many countries do you rule," but rather, "how many satellites do you have?" Satellites are involved in national and international defense, and thus this brings in the whole question of power.

Power, the drive for it and exercise of it, obviously plays an important role in terms of international political concerns. Satellite countries boost one's power as does the possession of nuclear weapons. Certainly economic advantages as well as natural resources and size, in terms of geography and population, also figure into power.

We thus find many political areas of concern: extension of borders, the arms race, suppression of freedom, just to name a few. Like the area of economics, the national political problems can be roughly compared to the international problems. Within the United States one finds various means of suppression of freedom, especially in reference to minority groups. Though the complexion of this problem is changing, it is nonetheless present. Within our own borders we find a clash over the meaning of "nationalism." This clash finds opposing sides holding contradictory views of what it means to be an American, and what America means and stands for. The recent rash of bumper stickers points to this area of tension. On the one side we find the "conservative" people brandishing the sticker which reads: "America-- love it or leave it!" On the other hand, we find the opposing group saying: "America--change it or lose it!" Both groups feel that they are standing very much in the tradition of what it means to be an American; yet both sides hold radically contradictory viewpoints. What all of this points to is that nationalism, its definition and increasing presence, is a problem within our own borders.

Another area of national political concern is at the point of national policies and allocation of funds. Groups are radically opposed as to the way in which our government spends its money. One

group feels that too much money is being spent on education and welfare

and not enough on defense and scientific research, e.g. the moon proj-

ects. Other groups feel that the way money is currently being spent

denies the needs of our poor people, and wastes much of our resources

on such things as armaments and moon probes. They feel the money would

be much more wisely spent in the problems of the cities, and in areas

related to needs of developing countries. Hence, we find that political

problems are indeed an area of concern for twentieth-century man, both

on the national and international scale.

3. Race

The third area of concern is the area of race. The domination

of the white race which is a minority of the world's population, over

the peoples of the world, has created a number of very deep social

problems. Moltmann states this concern in the following manner:

> In all candor . . . we must admit the fact that the progress of the
> white has been purchased with the regress of the nonwhite man. The
> white superiority complex has systematically bred an inferiority
> complex in the nonwhite man. The nonwhite man was reduced to 'his
> place' where as menial 'helper' and servant he was obliged to serve
> white progress and, only within clearly delineated boundaries, to
> share in it. This political humiliation of man to a condition of
> unfreedom is hardly distinguishable from the human humiliation of
> man to a condition of inhumanity. Here man is offended in the very
> core of his person. It is therefore inevitable that the victims of
> white racism will rebel and sue for their lost humanity. As a
> result of the racial revolution during the coming decades, the
> present world could very well sink into oblivion.[5]

There are a number of important problems which must be pointed

out regarding the area of race, both on the national and international

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[5]*Ibid.,* p. 40.

scale. As Moltmann points out, the white race has set itself up as the superior race. This has resulted in a lowering of the feelings of personal dignity, self-esteem, and pride on the part of the members of the non-white races. It is almost as if the white minority of the world has told the non-white majority of the world that the white people have been responsible for most all advances which civilized man has made; and the myth has been repeated enough times, and in such a variety of ways, that the non-white majority has believed it. This internalizing of inferiority feelings has had devastating results. For example, in a recent seminar meeting of people from all parts of the world, one black South African man very emotionally and sincerely asked the white participants in the seminar, "Just what *have* we (non-white races) contributed to the world, anyway?"[6]

Coupled to this lowered self-understanding one finds that the non-whites in many cultures have been forced to play subservient roles. They usually have been the employees rather than the employers. The result of this has been that few non-whites have had practical education and experience in positions of leadership, and thus their role as subservient is perpetuated. And in those few areas where indigenous leadership has had a chance to gain control of government, it has been difficult for them to begin. They have had to learn, often by means of trial and error, primary functions and styles of government.

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[6]This is a personal illustration from a seminar at the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, Chateau de Bossey, Switzerland, January, 1969.

Most all of the tensions which exist between the races, i.e. white and non-white, have begun to collect into one very general direction towards violence. This can be discussed most adequately in relationship to the national situation of the United States. In the United States one finds a growing trend towards militancy on the part of the non-whites, especially on the part of the blacks and browns. Groups like the Black Panthers and the Brown Berets have drawn increasingly larger numbers of supporters. Though the more non-violent groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and La Causa still have many followers, people are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their "results." The fact of the matter is that the more militant groups and demands garner much more attention and action than the more "careful" and "diplomatic" requests.

This rise of militancy is not just on the non-white side of the racial line. With the increase of militancy on the part of the non-whites, one finds an increase in hostility and militancy on the parts of some of the whites. Thus, at the same time that one finds the Black Panthers arming to defend themselves and their cause, one finds the American Nazi Party in Orange County, California, doing the same. This is the so-called "backlash." It is very real, and must be taken seriously. The problems concerning race, on the national and international scale, continue to exist, and seem to be moving more towards culminating in some kind of massive violence. This is the kind of reaction that Moltmann predicted in the statement just cited.

C. GUIDELINES

This, then, is a brief overview of some of the major problems confronting men today on the national and international scene. The question which must be posed here is, "What are the ethical implications of our Christian faith for these general national and international problems?" Since each one of the three areas mentioned, i.e. economics, politics, and race, are such large areas in and of themselves, we shall look at the implications of our faith for only one area. The area which we have chosen is economics, not because it is more important than the other two, but because it is less often discussed than the others.

The task with which we are thus confronted is that of seeing how our Christian faith relates to the world economic order. We are therefore engaged in asking what kinds of responsibilities we as Christians have for the economic structures of our nation and our world. We are asking more specifically how we as American Christians living in the latter-half of the twentieth century are to act on questions of economics.

To give a list of the specific ways in which we are to respond in specific situations would go against the whole style of the theological foundation which has been presented. We have seen an emphasis upon flexibility, adaptability, and change, which would suggest that in terms of ethics we should have some general guidelines in terms of which to make decisions. Beyond that, we should take each situation into account, recognizing its own unique properties, and at the same

time, recognizing the way in which it is a part of our Christian life and responsibility. After we have looked at the situation, and related our general principles to that, we can begin to carve some more definite course of action.

The general principles which flow from Moltmann's theological foundation may be summarized in the following five statements. They are by no means exhaustive, but do indicate the kinds of questions which the Christian must ask in trying to evaluate his action in any given situation. The principles are:

1. From the time of Moses God has promised freedom to the captives. How may we help to produce freedom in this situation? What keeps men captive here?

2. God has proclaimed a new hope for mankind in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Life has triumphed over death. What are the things which produce death in this situation? How can these be overcome with new life in the present?

3. God has infected men with hope for a new future through Christ. How is this new hope felt and made real in this situation?

4. God has given us a missionary task. We are to proclaim new hope and life through Christ for *all* men. We are to act out the future of God's Kingdom in the present. In this situation, how is this done? How do we bring this present into a new future?

5. The resurrection of Christ showed the love of God for all men. How do we express God's love in this situation?

These principles give us an indication of the way in which we may evaluate our actions, then, in any situation, economic or otherwise.

1. International Application

When we turn specifically to the field of economics on the national and international scene in order to apply our principles, we find a myriad of problems. In order to gain some idea of what we can

do with our general ethical principles or guidelines, let us lift out only one major problem, and look at some of the possible courses of action which our guidelines might recommend.

Earlier in our discussion of economic problems we pointed out that poverty was one of the leading world and national economic problems. How do our guidelines help us in responding to the problem of poverty? Emphasizing again that one cannot effectively discuss this apart from a situation let us take the poverty in the country of Brazil. How do we respond to that situation? In order to discuss this question with some degree of intelligibility let us look at some of the facts of the situation.

When we attempt to gain the "facts" of the situation in Brazil, we find ourselves confronting a very difficult problem. Whose "facts" do we use? Do we use the "facts" compiled by the government of Brazil or that of the United States? Do we use the facts compiled by missionaries, or those by the Central Intelligence Agency? All of these groups, and the others to which we might turn, represent their own particular interests. Thus, the "facts" which they present often skew the picture of the country to fit the image which the group in question wants to project. Thus, when Governor Rockefeller of the state of New York returned to the United States recently after having visited Brazil, he maintained that it was important for the United States to protect the military regime of Brazil. They were supposed to be helping the people. In absolute contradiction to this stands the picture of Brazil painted by some Brazilian priests who recently spoke about the situation of their country. It was their impression that it was the

military government of Brazil which kept the country in a state of poverty and starvation.

Since this paper cannot look at the total picture of Brazil, the presentation might be somewhat lop-sided. While this is true, i.e. since we will present only one side of the picture, it is assumed that one can glean from the presentation the way in which one might apply the ethical guidelines given earlier. This is the point of the presentation. When one then performed the same kind of procedure on a problem which had been probed at depth, it should be possible for him to really apply his theology to his ethics. With this in mind, let us look at the situation in Brazil.

In a personal conversation with three priests from Brazil several important features of that country's current economic plight were pointed out.[7] First, one-eighth of the people control seven-eighths of the land and the wealth. While one-eighth of the people continue to get rich, seven-eighths of the people not only get poor, but die of starvation. Second, although Brazil is a lush country, with many possibilities for food production, it has very little agriculture. One could say that it has a monoculture, i.e. coffee. Coffee is the producer of wealth for the rich one-eighth of the population, whereas other items of agriculture would not bring in as much revenue; the market would not be nearly so good. This means that although the country could easily produce enough food to feed its population, the one-eighth which controls the government of the country continues to

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[7]*Ibid.*

produce coffee while its people starve. Third, the common people have little or nothing to say about the way in which the wealth of the country is allocated. Military regime is replaced by military regime. Each new government imposes its own style of restriction of freedom in terms of public expression. Indeed, people in the United States often know more about what is going on in Brazil than the Brazilians themselves. This is due to the strict censorship of the press, and limitation of speech. Hence, the possibilities of changing the economic structures of that country are very limited, and difficult to work through.

Given this kind of economic situation, how do Christians act in response to their faith, and to the problem? The indigenous Brazilian Christians have a big task before them, one which they have not accepted up to the present time. They must facilitate the changing of economic structures in their own country. Rather than trying to "tell the Brazilians" what to do, however, what is *our* responsibility as American Christians to their situation?

One of the first things which American Christians would have to do in response to the general principles set forth earlier would be to help the Brazilian Christians to face their own problems. Responding to the principle of finding the points of captivity in the situation, we would have to begin to point to the government, their style of operation, and their control of the people. In order to become really free, the Brazilian people would have to begin to change their style of government. One way in which we American Christians could do this most effectively would be by exerting pressure upon our own government to

stop supporting the military regimes which continue to oppress the people. This would be a sticky problem for the United States government, in that the U.S. buys a great deal of its coffee from Brazil. By resisting the Brazilian government, the U.S. would be cutting off some of its own sources of wealth. Judging from the past, it is therefore doubtful that the U.S. government would do this. This latter fact, however, should not be the determinate of how Christians act. As will be remembered from our theological foundation, our religious ideals are not to be subservient to the ideals and ideas of the state and its government. Our Christian faith is the establisher of our priorities.

Second, we can see many things which produce "death" in Brazil, things which run from starvation to censorship of the press and speech. Thus, in order to bring new life to the Brazilian people, we would have to find ways in which to overcome these means of death. We would have to attempt to help the Brazilian people to so transform the structures of the economic life of their country that the varied forms of death would be overcome. One way in which we could do this would be through the indigenous churches. We could try to help the Brazilian Christians look at their situation in broad perspective, and share with them the search for a really new life. This would bring us to a third point.

We could share with them our own understanding of the hope of mankind, which would include an understanding of the sharing of material wealth among all people. In so doing we might be able to kindle hope within them. To be sure, the hope of the people of Brazil would not rest with changing the economic order; our Christian faith takes us well beyond that. The economic order is an important facet of mankind,

however, and therefore would have to be dealt with in a strong manner.

Fourth, we might try to look at the new future for all men in Christ, and all that it might entail. Together with the Brazilian Christians we could seek out a new kind of future in the present. For the Brazilians this might mean a radical form of revolution, politically and economically. In order to assist the cause there would also have to be some radical economic revision on the part of the American Christians, especially in relation to the way in which our country spends money. Not only would there need to be a reapportionment of monies, but also a new view of the way in which the monies would be spent. Thus, Brazil would have more to say about the development funds which we gave them. We might also reconsider the amount of technological aid which we give them, and try to change that picture.

What is being stated here essentially is that we would have to attempt to express our concern and love for the people of Brazil by means of first taking their economic problems seriously, and then influencing our own government to do all that it could to help alleviate the situation. Beyond this, realizing that our own government is far from perfect, we would have to attempt to work with our fellow Christians in Brazil in proclaiming the freedom and new life in Christ to *all* of their people, and hope that they would become motivated by our shared hope. This, then, is one way in which we might look at the ethical implications of our faith in a practical setting, at least on the international scale. One could quite easily perform the same kind of analysis on the national scene. Rather than developing that point, however, it seems more appropriate to turn to the local situation.

2. Local Application

It is in the local situation that faith is tested constantly. Here one must put oneself "on the line," not as part of some sort of anonymous mass movement, or as part of some large governmental agency, but as an individual with certain family and community relationships. While the international and national problems are important for the individual, they usually do not hit him with as great an impact as do the local areas of struggle and concern. Thus, we approach this last area of ethical concern with an understanding and appreciation of its importance.

The way in which we shall approach the ethical implications of our faith for the local situation is by means of looking at one particular local church and its community. Though it is quite a limited presentation, it is felt that there are enough similarities among local churches and their communities to make possible some degree of generalization. One can glean from this specific situation the data and possibilities which might be relevant for his own situation. More importantly, however, one can see the way in which one might find ethical implications of his Christian faith for his own situation.

The local church which we shall examine is Monrovia United Methodist Church, located in Monrovia, California. We shall look first at the town, and second at the church.

Monrovia is a town of some 31,242 people.[8] Being located twenty

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[8]William Scully, *Monrovia Community Study* (Sacramento: State Department of the Youth Authority, 1968), p. 1.

miles northeast of Los Angeles, the town is a part of the West San Gabriel Valley. The town is basically residential, with about 60% of the land in the city being used for residential purposes. Though there are 300 manufacturing plants in Monrovia, less than one-fourth of the population of the city works in any one of these plants.[9] Racially the city could be likened to the United States in miniature. The 1960 census showed that Monrovia's population was 87% white, 9% Negro, and 4% Mexican American. The census estimates in 1965 showed that the Negro population had grown to approximately 12%.[10] In connection with this black populous one finds a ghetto situation existing in Monrovia. And with the residential ghetto comes an educational ghetto. For example, there is one elementary school in town which is approximately 95% black. Since there is only one major public high school, however, integration is a must, at least by the high school level. Currently, there is a program which will close the all-black elementary school, and join black and white students in the now predominately white schools.

According to a recent community study the main problems which Monrovia faces are a crime and delinquency problem, drug abuse especially by young people, and racial tension.[11] Other problems which soon become evident to any observant person living and/or working in the community are divorce and old age. A recent private study conducted by a local minister in Monrovia points to the fact that divorce is an important sociological problem in Monrovia. The most important fact

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[9]*Ibid.*,   [10]*Ibid.*,

[11]*Ibid.*, Introduction.

raised by this study was that in 1967-68, 58% of the students at Monrovia High School were living with one parent.[12] Also, anyone working in a church in Monrovia soon finds himself confronted with a large number of divorcees, especially women with younger children.

The problem of old age is also a factor in the sociological make-up of the city. In 1960 the census revealed that approximately one-fifth of the town was over 60 years of age.[13] Although this does not seem to be an overwhelming figure, one must see its connection to the churches to understand the importance of the problem. For example, at the United Methodist Church of Monrovia the average age of the member is 54.5 years of age. Thus, although the community at large is younger, the worshipping community is considerably older. Hence, the churches find that they must confront the problems connected with old age.

Undoubtedly, one could point to other areas of problems which exist within the city of Monrovia. Only those which seem to be the most pressing for the community at large, or the general church population of the city were selected, however. With these problems, one can gain at least a partial understanding of the city.

And what about Monrovia United Methodist Church? What are its statistics, needs, and concerns? Monrovia United Methodist Church for the year 1969 reported a membership of 864 members. The indications are currently that this membership will be essentially the same in 1969.

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[12]Personal interview with Rev. W. Lee Truman, Monrovia United Methodist Church, Monrovia, California, October, 1969.

[13]Scully, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Of this membership there are, practically speaking, no black members, and few members of other minority races. This means that although there are the names of a couple of black members on the church roles, there are none in attendance at worship or the activities of the church fellowship. There is one black adult who helps to lead the Boy Scout troop connected with the church, but he is a member of a local Baptist church. Thus, we find a white membership for the most part.

In terms of ages, as has already been mentioned the average age is 54.5 years of age. When the age groupings are broken down one finds that 13% of the membership is between 20-25 years of age, 7% between 26-35 years of age, 8.5% between 36-45 years of age, 28.5% between 46-60 years of age, and 30% over 60 years of age.[14] Thus, one finds that practically one-third of the membership of the church is over 60 years of age, and almost two-thirds of the membership is over 45 years of age. While the mid-forties could hardly be considered the winter of life, one must note that the bulk of the members of the church are quite stable in terms of jobs, housing, ideas, and all that go along with these. An additionally important point is that the leadership of the church rests with the people over 45. This has something to say about the future of this particular church. This says something also about one major problem area which this particular church must confront, if not presently, at least in the near future.

Aside from the more formally statistical side of the church, what are the particular areas of concern and need which it is confronted by?

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[14]This was from a personal study done on the church.

First of all, as was evident by the statistical picture, the church is segregated *de facto*. This presents some obvious problems in terms of its ability to relate to the whole of the human community which exists in Monrovia. Recently, when the pastor of the church had a kind of confrontation between the members of the church and some of the city's black militants, a few of the members of the church stopped attending the church, and stopped participating in any of its activities. These were not just the fair-weather friends, but included some of the more important leaders of the church. Hence, we see that the church is faced in its own life by the racial problem.

Secondly, again as indicated by the statistics, the church faces a problem of how to effectively minister to the needs of the aged. Beyond the fact that there is a large number of people in the church which is over 60 years of age there are other important considerations here. For example, in looking at the leadership of Monrovia United Methodist, one finds that almost 80% of the church leaders is over 45 years of age. One thus notes that the flip-side of the problems connected with the aged is the problem of developing leadership. If few young adults are currently participating in the church on the decision and program-making level, what does this say for the future of the church? Also, if few of the people below 45 years of age are contributing much to the program of the church, where will the financial base of the church be in the future? The problems connected with having an older membership, in terms of developing leadership for the future and securing a financial base for the future, are manifold.

With the aging people, one finds that there is also a problem of style of ministry. How does one minister to the needs of the aged? What kinds of programs should be developed to meet the needs of this group of people?

Another problem which Monrovia United Methodist faces is in the area of divorce. To put this into focus one need only point to the number of divorced people who are part of the membership of the church. Whether they became divorced while a part of this church is not the point; that they now are a part of that fellowship, and find themselves either alone or the single head of a household is the point. Thus, they are in need of the life and community of the church. Since the church is so often family-oriented, however, they find that they are excluded from full participation in the life of the church. Thus, they turn to other organizations to help them answer their questions about life and their place in it. In Monrovia Methodist one finds that the ways in which the single members have groped for life-orientation differ. They range from participation in the local "Parents without Partners," to participation in nudism. The church does not provide aids to wrestling with the problems, however, in this particular issue. And although the statistic has not been recently computed, by examining the membership list one can find a significant number of church members who are formerly marrieds.

Monrovia Methodist also faces the whole question of youth culture, especially as it relates to the question of drug abuse. Like many other towns in the United States today, the young people of Monrovia are "turning-on" in the drug world. Speed, L.S.D., "reds,"

and all of the other kinds of drugs are both plentiful and accessible in the local community to the teen-aged population. Thus, the members of the local church are faced with the problem of how to handle this situation, which involves some of their own youth. On this particular issue, the local church has made some significant efforts. The most important program which they developed in response to this problem was a drop-in counseling center for teen-agers and their parents called "Reach Out." Although this center which appeals mostly to youth caught in drug problems was begun by the Monrovia church, it soon became funded by the city. Now the church rents one of its parsonages to the counseling center for a nominal fee, and the city is responsible for funding the rest of the program. Hence, many more people have become involved than would have otherwise.

One last problem which must be pointed out which exists in the local church about which we are speaking is the gap between clergy and laity which was discussed in the first chapter. In Monrovia Methodist church one finds the same kind of gap existing which is true of the protestant church in the United States in general. The clergy has some definite ideas about what the church ought to be doing in terms of social action, but the laity is not clear about why they ought to be doing these sorts of things. The gap between theology and ethics is definitely present in this particular church.

There are certainly many other problems which Monrovia United Methodist Church faces which could be discussed here. Such problems as evangelism, i.e. increasing both the quality and quantity of the church's membership, worship, general finance, music, staffing, and

other problems are a part of the life of this church as they are of most churches. We have only looked at a few selected problems, however, which appear to be ones which are vitally involved in the question of the essence of this local church.

Given the fact that there are many problems which are important in the life of this local church, and given the fact that our theology moves us to a stance of involvement, how could this local church go about involving itself in the problems which have been pointed out? To state it more personally, how could individual Christians, who are members of Monrovia United Methodist Church and of the Monrovia community, go about relating their theology and their ethics in their local scene?

As with the area of international and national affairs, we shall select only one problem for examination. As before, we will present the problem, and then apply our ethical guidelines to that problem. Again, it is hoped that one will be able to gain a general mood and/or stance from this presentation, which will help him to meet the particular needs in his own local situation. For the purpose of discussion we shall pick the area of divorce. The reason for selecting this problem is that it is the least discussed of all of the problems mentioned, and involves a significant number of people.

For the most part the people in the Monrovia church who are formerly married are female, and under the age of forty. Also, in most of the cases, there are children involved. Thus, these women find themselves in the situation of being single, having to provide a home for one or more youngsters, and having to earn an income. In addition

to these women who have been formerly married, one finds some adults in the church who are single for other reasons. Either they have never married, for one reason or another, or they have been married and lost their mate through death. These latter two groups are not nearly so significant in terms of numbers as are the divorcees, however.

In trying to relate our guidelines for ethical action to this area of the formerly married, we find ourselves faced with a series of questions. These questions must be answered in order to see the way in which we can relate our theology to this problem area. First of all, we must see what the actual needs and concerns of this group of people are. Second, we must examine the way in which the local church is currently trying to minister to their needs and concerns. Thirdly, we must examine a new perspective on the problem.

First of all, what are the actual needs and concerns of this group of people in Monrovia? One cannot answer this question in one or two short sentences. To begin to answer it we first must note the problem of new life-orientation which is a necessity imposed upon the recently divorced person. Whereas before the divorce (not necessarily immediately before) one's life was wrapped around a relationship with a particular other person, now this relationship no longer exists. Thus, what does one do to fill this void? Is finding a new mate the answer? Is the friendship of someone of the opposite sex who will not necessarily become a mate part of the answer? How about relationship with other people through some sort of community of friends? Thus, we find that one important area of concern is loneliness.

A second area of concern is that of insecurity. Whereas before

there was a sense of security, both in terms of relationship and finances, this often is lost with divorce. On the part of the male, he often must provide payments to his former wife, and child support for his children. This remains the case if he remarries. The woman finds herself in an equally difficult spot. As mentioned before, she must many times earn a living to make ends meet. The money which she receives from her former husband is not enough compared to the cost of living and rearing a family. Apart from financial security, the security of relationship is also broken. One suddenly finds oneself single, and this has many implications. For example, although one had many friends prior to his divorce, suddenly he doesn't fit in as he used to. He is no longer a couple. This is not true in one's circle of friends alone. When we look at the church, we find an organization which is primarily geared to the family, i.e. the group which includes husband and wife. When either one of the partners is missing, one somehow does not fit quite so well anymore. A recent incident at the Monrovia United Methodist Church illustrates what is meant here. After the service of worship one summer Sunday morning, the minister to young adults spotted a youngish woman with her children in church. Noting that she was new, after the service he sought her out, and welcomed her and her children to the church. He then invited her to participate in a young couples group which was in the process of being formed. "I'm not a couple any more," was her poignant reply. This statement made the minister take note of the huge gap which existed in the church program. She was not the only person in that situation, and yet the church did effectively nothing to attempt to minister to the needs of

these people. Thus, when one became faced with the problem in insecurity and turned to his church community for help, at least in this situation he drew a blank. Although some individuals might have tried to express their concern in various ways, the church as a whole body had no response. Thus, insecurity and a kind of alienation is a problem.

A third area of concern for many of the formerly marrieds is anxiety about parenthood. Whichever one of the parents finally has custody of the children in the case of divorce, or whichever one is left to rear the children in the case of death, the problem is similar. One parent must try to play the role which both parents played earlier. This creates obvious problems when one thinks about such things as discipline, male figures for boys and female figures for girls, and the role which living in a "complete" family plays for the growing youngster.

Sex is another problem area for the single adult. If he is single due to divorce, sex has often entered into the problem. Often, the sexual relationship between the partners in the marriage has been bad immediately prior to the divorce, and hence there exists a kind of anxiety about the whole meaning and role of sex. It is even possible that frigidity or impotency played a role in the divorce itself. Additionally, it must be noted that a sexual relationship, i.e. one which includes sexual intercourse, has been a part of the former married relationship. When the relationship is dissolved, so is the possibility for this kind of sexual expression, at least as the moral standards of the majority of these adults allow. Thus, when they

begin thinking about sex, either in terms of its absence or in terms of desire for this kind of relationship, they often do nothing more than create tremendous guilt feelings within themselves. At this point the church is not extremely helpful. If it even takes note of the fact that this is a problem, it usually tries to answer the problem with a movement towards "redirecting one's energies," that is to say sublimation. The relative value of this kind of "help" is dubious, to say the least.

Certainly there are other problems which crop up in talking about the single adult, i.e. in terms of either those who have been married formerly, or have never been married. Again, we have pointed to only a few of the seemingly more important problem areas.

The second question which we must then ask is, "what is the church doing to minister to the need of these people?" More specifically, "what is Monrovia United Methodist Church doing to minister to the needs of the single adults who are a part of that fellowship?"

Although a sweeping generalization is always dangerous, one finds himself tempted to do just that. It is almost accurate to say that *nothing* is done for these people at the Monrovia church. One must retain the "almost" of the last sentence to allow for the individual counseling which is carried on by the ministerial staff for these people, the open invitations which are made to many of the church functions, and the fact that the educational program is open to the children of the people discussed here. Other than that, however, one can definitely say that nothing is being carried out by the Monrovia church in terms of ministry to the single adult.

Hence, we find ourselves brought to the third question. How could Monrovia United Methodist Church involve itself with the problem of the single adult population of the city (i.e. especially to the single members of the church) as a response to the theology which we have discussed? What are the ethical implications of this theology for the particular problem of the single adult in the specific situation of Monrovia United Methodist Church?

Let us refer again to the guidelines listed earlier. We can allow them to help us formulate some possible steps which might be taken in the local situation.

First of all we ask the question of what it is which keeps men captive in this situation. As a corollary of this question we ask what it is which might help to produce freedom here. Regarding the single adult there are a number of items which help keep the people "captives" of the situation. The fact that few, if any, church programs are open to them keeps them isolated from the mainstream of the church life. This isolation, by circumstance if not design, is one way in which they are kept captives of their own situation. Another thing which keeps them captive is loneliness or aloneness. Since so many of the church programs are for couples, and since the orientation of so many of the church people is toward the family, the single adult finds himself alone and lonely. Rather than being able to relate to the total church community, he finds that he is only able to have any kind of meaningful relationship with people who are in a similar situation to himself, i.e. single people. This is not a negative fact in general, but becomes at least partially negative when one sees that often the single person

is not able to choose his own relationships, but rather often has them limited for him by the social structure of his church community. A third item, which cannot be separated from the first two, is that of unrelatedness. By the fact that one is not allowed to really fully participate in the life of the church, because of its family nature, he often finds that he feels somewhat unrelated; it is almost as if he is an outsider.

Given at least these three things which help to make the single adult a "captive" in the Monrovia Methodist situation, what would our theology or our own creativity suggest as ways in which these people might be "freed?" The first thing which comes to mind is a reorientation of programming which would be more inclusive. This means that programs would be not necessarily less family centered, but at least much more inclusive of those who were not a part of the usual family relationship. Thus, the emphasis would be on the fellowship of all believers, rather than on the fellowship of believers who have similar home environments. There could also be an attempt made to carve out some new kind of program aimed at the single adults, which would give them an additional possibility to work through their own understanding of faith and life *vis-a-vis* their own particular situation. This would not be so very different from some of the programs which already exist for families, or for youth. Actually, Monrovia Methodist, as a result of having become aware of this dilemma, is beginning to try to tackle this problem. One new program has been created for single adults, which will span all of the main-line protestant churches of both Monrovia and Arcadia, the neighboring city. As a trial run, the

program will focus on interpersonal relationships, and will begin with a series of sensitivity-oriented meetings with two local psycho-therapists. Each one of these sessions will be five hours long, and there will be approximately 12 participants per session. The aim is to explore with the local single adults themselves the areas which they feel are important, to find their needs, and to share together in the search for a vital form of ministry which is really relevant for their needs.

Another way in which the Monrovia United Methodist Church could try to "free" these people would be in a fresh effort at the expression of *real* concern for all of the members. If this were as much a part of the practice of the members as it is a part of the theory, there would be an entirely different evaluation of the church. Since it remains a "good idea," however, and nothing more, it must be underscored again. Again, we could say that some attempt has been made recently to correct this problem. By installing an "experimental" worship service as part of the morning worship possibility, and by designing that service to move towards a maximum of participation and individual sharing, there began to arise on the part of a small band of people this feeling of real concern for the total membership. Unfortunately, however, the number of participants remained significantly smaller than had been the case with an additional traditional worship service, so the experiment was dropped. Again, the people who weren't so concerned about con-tinuing the experimental form of worship were full families, and interestingly enough, young families. The point remains that however it is done, through worship, preaching, classes, and the general life

of the church, there must be a vigorous attempt to create a community

of the concerned which will relate all of the membership to one another.

The second question which our ethical guideline asks is, what is

it which produces death in this situation? In Monrovia, the two things

which can produce a kind of death, which the single people are not

adequately helped to overcome, are guilt and anxiety. These are

closely connected, and it is difficult to say where one stops and the

other starts, i.e. to explain the relationship of the two. The guilt

which these people have generally centers on all which led up to the

divorce proceedings, including their own part in the cause of the

divorce. Thus, one finds a kind of guilt on the part of the divorced

adult about not having been able to maintain a marriage relationship.

One also finds here anxiety, however, about future relationships,

especially with possible mates. If the first marriage relationship

failed, does that indicate that the individual in question is somehow

inadequate? Is there something wrong with him or her which will make

future marital relationships impossible? Will people judge him or her

severely or unfairly because he or she is divorced? All of these things

and more go into feeding the feelings of guilt and anxiety. Both of

these can be real death-producers, especially in reference to the ego

of the individual involved.

At this point, our theology would have some very direct things

to say about the way in which we might react to these feelings on the

part of our single members. For one thing, we can stop reinforcing the

feelings. The church in Monrovia is no different from others in terms

of coming to grips with this problem. It really has done little about

it, apart from the feelings of the pastor. Thus, as was suggested in the first point, there needs to be a real push on the importance of compassion and understanding, i.e. real concern and love of the other person. For example, rather than implying by our statements about morality in general that sex apart from marriage is wrong, we must look at the question directly, especially in the way in which the divorced adult might raise it. This is not to say that all or even most divorced adults secretly are interested in sex apart from marriage. It is saying, however, that the whole question of sex in the life of the divorced adult must be handled with real feeling for those persons for whom it is much more than a theoretical question. Thus, rather than giving an emphatic "no," we might begin to feel with the people, and begin to ask what we would do ourselves, in the same situation, in response to our personal needs and our view of life and faith.

In this particular situation, i.e. in this whole realm of dealing with the single adult in the local church, the answers to the third, fourth, and fifth points of our ethical guideline are similar. The third point concerns the way in which we can inject new hope into the situation, the fourth concerns the way in which we might work out the meaning of the Kingdom of God in this situation, and the fifth concerns the way in which love is expressed in this situation. The answer for all of these points can be summed up in two words and one concept—Christian Community. It is through the actualization of Christian Community that each person is accepted on his own terms, regardless of marital status or job status or economic status or whatever. It is through the working out of this concept that we as Christians in a

particular place and time are able to share together in the search for our common future in Christ. Thus, we are able to express our love and concern for others because we are all relatively in the same position; we are all twentieth-century Christians, moving out of a particular past through a common present into a somewhat unknown future. And we all must deal with the meaning of our faith through this whole process. Through Christian Community we are able to give to the other Christians the peculiar perspective which each one of us as an individual has, and we are able to gain from the others their own perspective. Together, we therefore are able to put many more pieces of life's puzzle together.

The way in which Christian Community is realized in the local church would in itself be a massive venture to describe. One can only say, in brief form, that all of the church's ministry is involved: preaching, worship, counseling, administration, music, etc. Each part of the church has its own role to play, and each one is important. Trite as it may seem, the actualization of Christian Community depends upon cooperation. Each individual and group within the church must be committed first to their faith, and then to a common working out of this faith through the vehicle of the church. From there, it is a matter of utilizing each avenue to its fullest advantage, but only insofar as it harmonizes with the rest of the unit. Through this cooperation of the community of the committed and the concerned, the Christian Community can become a reality, and the facing of the problems of the single adult will become part of the entire group concern.

D. SUMMARY

We have thus seen the way in which our faith might be applied in the situation of the single adult in the local church. Beyond that we have seen the way in which our faith relates to the more general questions of the national and international nature. In order to gain a full perspective, however, we need to summarize where we have been in the course of the entire study.

We first looked at the gap which exists between clergy and laity; it was defined primarily in terms of a different understanding of the way in which faith relates to ethics. Secondly, we suggested that the overcoming of this gap might be realized through a fresh look at some basic theological components of our faith. Therefore, we examined the concepts of promise, resurrection, and eschatology. We saw that each one of these elements had definite thrusts towards involvement; each one of them supported from a different angle the importance of the link between belief and action, between theology and ethics. Hence, we saw that the basic thrust of the Christian faith contained a strong motivation for involvement in the pressing problems of modern life. In order to see what this might mean, we finally looked at some of the ethical implications of our faith for international, national, and local problems. After having drawn up a set of general guidelines to help us apply our faith in terms of our ethics, we used these guidelines in two specific situations. First, we looked at the way in which American Christians might respond to their faith in the problems which are faced currently by the Christians of Brazil. Second, we looked at the way in

which a local church might apply its faith to the problem of the relationship of the single adult to the normally family-centered local church.

The purpose of the entire study has been to help one gain an appreciation of the social nature of the Christian faith, and more than that, to see the importance of a Christian-faith orientation towards life as being a very vital way in which one might face the problems of mankind, and move into solving them in light of a really new future. The Christian hope for the future is invigorating, and brings life to a situation of death and despair. By following the God of the Promise, who brought *new* life in the resurrection of Christ, we are enabled to move into involvement in the present with faith in the future. In the process which evolves out of this commitment, we shall be able to face the problems that beset men today with a very real sense of confidence!

CHAPTER IV

PUTTING THE STUDY TO WORK

This chapter is strikingly different from those which have come

before. Its emphasis is upon management within the local church

setting, and thus it tends to deal more with questions of organization

than of theology or ethics. The style of management which has been

selected, however, has a great deal to do with the theology and ethics

which have come before. The style which we have chosen is one which

embodies many of the principles set forth by our theological and

ethical work. Thus, when we now talk about the way in which the first

three chapters of this study might be integrated into the life of a

local church, we find that we are talking about management, but not in

isolation. We find that we are talking about a kind of approach to

management in the local church which will not only do the job of busi-

ness, but do it in a manner which is harmonious with our theological/

ethical position.

The style of management which we have chosen to present and

utilize in this discussion is "systems analysis." The core of "systems

analysis," at least as it will be presented here, lies in the ideas of

cooperation, flexibility, group process, emphasis upon the individual

and the group of which he is a part, and group goal setting. All of

these flow very much out of the kind of theology and ethics which we

have been discussing. We talked about a future which motivated us in

the present; this can be translated into goals and goal-setting in the

language of management. We talked about the importance of Christian

community; this can be translated into cooperation and flexibility in the management setting. As will be seen, most all of the ideas which we have discussed in theology and ethics cohere very closely to the systemic approach to management which we have chosen to present.

Aside from the fact that this approach to management is the form most consistent with our theological/ethical stance, one should be aware of the fact that systems analysis is currently one of the most important contemporary styles of management in the worlds of business and industry. One no longer finds that classical management, with its emphasis upon productivity, or human relations, with its emphasis upon sensitivity training, are the dominant approaches to management. It now appears as though systems analysis is the way of the future, at least the immediate future.

A final aspect of systems analysis which is important for our purposes is the fact that it lends itself to the local church setting. Although this style of management is used by large corporations, it works equally well for the small-sized group. Thus, in the local church setting one can identify the same kinds of processes and variables which operate in the larger forms of organization.

The way in which we shall approach our discussion of this final section of the study is as follows. First, we shall look at some definitions of systems analysis, so that we might have firmly in mind what it is we are talking about. Second, we shall examine an outline of the structures important in laying out a system, i.e. in general terms. Third, we will put these points of the outline into the context of the local church, i.e. the local United Methodist church. Fourth,

we will examine the way in which these structures and facets of the local church might be utilized, i.e. might be worked with and through, in the local church to bring the thrust of the whole study to bear on the life of the local church. Fifth, there will be some concluding remarks made in terms of summary.

A. DEFINITIONS

First of all, we look at some of the definitions of systems analysis. In his book *The Professional Manager*, Douglas McGregor defines a system as, ". . . an assembly of interdependent parts (sub-systems) *whose interaction determines its survival.*"[1] When one applies this to an organization, for the purpose of evaluating and organizing its structure, one engages in systems analysis. Thus, one looks at an organization in terms of the various elements of which it is composed, and at the ways in which these various elements work together (or do not work together) to reach the determined goals of the organization.

According to McGregor, when one applies a systems approach to the management of an organization, there are eight points which one should attempt to build.[2] Although these eight points concern the managerial team primarily, they can also define the work team in general. When all eight of these points are operating together with the work or managerial team, it is McGregor's opinion that one will

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[1]Douglas McGregor, *The Professional Manager* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 39.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 162ff.

have an optimal system. First, on the part of all the members of the group there should be an understanding of, mutual agreement about, and identification with the primary task of the group. Second, there must be open communication among all of the group members. Third, there must be mutual trust within the group. Fourth, mutual support must be functioning within the group. Fifth, there must be an effective management of human differences, i.e. there must be a creative dealing with conflict. Sixth, there should be a selective use of the team; each member should function where he functions best. Seventh, the skills of the members should be appropriated to those areas where they are needed, with all being viewed as equally important to the running of the system. Eighth, there should be an overall leader of the group who can creatively attempt to work out and integrate the first seven concepts. With all eight of these, one finds a system which will run with maximum output for the goals of all of those involved.

William G. Scott, in his book *Organization Theory*, has a similar understanding of systems analysis. Scott states his understanding in the following manner: "System and the interdependency of parts are interchangeable ideas. It is really quite impossible to understand individual behavior or the activities of informal organizations apart from the social system in which they interact. A human organization is a social system; the various discrete segments and functions in it do not behave as isolated elements. All parts affect all other parts. Every action has repercussions throughout the organization because all

units, human and nonhuman, are linked."[3] One sees the idea of coopera-

tion, i.e. teamwork towards a shared goal, as being the essential ele-

ment of Scott's understanding also. Each individual is important, but

especially as he relates his own knowledge and skill to gain a group-

decided end.

B. OUTLINE OF THE SYSTEM

After having given this sketch definition of what a system is,

Scott goes on to outline it in some detail.[4] It is his outline which

will serve as the way in which we shall understand system for the

purpose of this study. It will also be in terms of this outline that

we shall look at the task of putting the body of this study to work in

the local church. In the order in which we shall consider them, the

three major elements of a system, as presented by Scott, are: parts

of the system, linking processes of the system, and goals of the system.

One should keep in mind when reading through each one of these elements

the theological/ethical presentation which has been made. It is

through the translation of this theological/ethical position into

systemic terms, as was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter,

that this approach to management becomes most important for the life of

the churchman.

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[3]William G. Scott, *Organization Theory* (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1967), p. 120.

[4]*Ibid.*, pp. 124ff.

1. Parts of the System

In looking at the parts of the system, Scott lists five as being most important. First of all there are the individuals within the system. Here one takes into account the different personalities and attitudes and motives which one brings with him into the system. Thus, one is able to gain some kind of impression of the way in which different people will relate to the system overall.

The second part of the system is the formal organization. This is the official delineation of the various tasks involved in reaching the goal of the system. "The formal organization is an interrelated pattern of jobs which provides the structure for the economic and efficiency pursuits of the organization."[5] It is within the realm of this part of the system where authority rests. Whether or not power is here is another question.

The third part of the system is the informal organization. This is the unofficial lines through which communications and directives often proceed. This is also where power often resides, although there is little or no authority here. Hence, we are talking about the way in which people organize themselves, which exists apart from the official job descriptions of the various people employed in the system.

The fourth part of the system is the status and role-expectancies which are a part of the organization. Within this category one finds the official and unofficial "pecking-order" of the system. Hence, one finds here also a formal and informal arrangement. On the one hand, we

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[5]*Ibid.*, p. 125.

find those statuses and roles which go along with jobs. For example, the president of an organization has a different, and higher, status and role-expectancy than an assembly-line worker. On the other hand, we find that real status is often a function more of some kind of informal understanding than it is formal ordering. Thus, although the role and status accorded to a bishop, for example, might be formally quite high, this might not be the case at all on the informal level. Status and role-expectancy can also be a function of a group rather than an individual or an individual position. Thus, one particular group of people within the system might hold a greater status than another group.

The fifth part of the system is the physical environment of the work situation. This component is self-explanatory, in that it refers to the kind of setting within which a particular job is performed. Also involved here are the, ". . . technical-engineering-efficiency considerations which link the various jobs together."[6] These, then, are the five important parts of the system, i.e. the individual components of which the system is constituted. This is not the full description of the system, however.

2. Linking Processes of the System

The second basic element of a system is the various processes which link the parts of the system together, i.e. the linking processes. Scott lists three important linking processes: communication, balance,

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[6] *Ibid.*

and decision. As Scott phrases it, ". . . it is through them [the linking processes] that basic interactions are carried out which sustain the life of the organization."[7]

Through communication, several important functions are performed. Through communication, the individuals and groups within the system are enabled to speak with other individuals and groups which exist in the system. Not only is this intra-group and inter-group sharing facilitated through communication, but also communication makes possible the sharing of information with that which exists apart from the system, i.e. the outside world. Also, through communication it is possible to retain and retrieve information which has been a part of the system at some point in its history.[8]

The second linking process which Scott singles out as being important is that of balance. Balance is precisely what it says: it is the process within the system by means of which one attempts to ". . . maintain stability among the parts of the organization."[9] Thus, this is a central concept. When the system is imbalanced, for example when there is too much stress on the formal channels of communication or organization, then the system is apt to experience some form of impaired progress. One must take account of all of the parts of the system, its linking processes and goals, and constantly view these in connection with one another, in order for the system to operate at maximum efficiency and effectiveness. This is what is meant by balance.

The third linking process is decision. Decisions made on the

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[7]*Ibid.*, p. 127.   [8]*Ibid.*   [9]*Ibid.*

formal and informal level, which are communicated through both of these channels, operate to keep the various parts of the system in touch with one another and keep the system in motion. Since the decision made by any one segment of the system will finally affect the other parts of the system, the accurate transmition of these decisions to the groups and individuals is highly important. Here again, decisions are made both on the formal and informal level, a fact which is important when one is attempting to retain a sense of balance within the system.

3. Goals of the System

Thus far, we have seen the parts of the system, and the processes which link the parts of the system together. We turn now to the third element of the system, i.e. the goals of the system. Scott has set forth three major goals of any system: growth, stability, and interaction. As Scott views them, these three goals may be independent of one another, or may be interdependent; interdependence is the most likely relationship which they will have in any large organization or system, however.[10]

Interaction could be viewed as the first goal of the system. In Scott's understanding, interaction here, ". . . refers to systems which provide a medium for association of members from which they gain satisfaction. Human organizations are, of course, an example. We could interpret this more broadly, however, and say that any system which is dependent on the proper functioning of interrelated parts, like a clock,

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[10]*Ibid.*

seeks the interaction goal."[11] Thus, the importance of this goal is the relationship which is established among the various parts of any given system.

Stability as a goal is somewhat different. This really refers to the maintenance function of the system, i.e. the various means by which the organization or system continues its existence. While there might be some systems which would only have a kind of *ad hoc* existence, i.e. exist only to attain one particular goal and then be dissolved, for the most part systems are ongoing entities. They attain temporary goals, and then set new ones to guide the direction of future action. In order to have this possibility, then, a system must be constantly striving for a kind of relationship among its various parts which will lend itself to maintaining the general existence of the overall system. This is what is meant by stability as a goal.

The third goal of the system is growth. Not only do systems or organizations want to maintain or continue their existence; they also want to develop and grow. Growth is measured in several ways. The size of the organization is one measure of growth. Thus, whether or not the organization continues to expand in terms of size is important here. Another facet of growth is in terms of value to the individuals involved in the organization. Does the organization continually expand its horizons to new ideas and areas so that the individuals involved will not become stagnant? And yet another facet of growth is in terms of inner-development within the organization itself. What is meant

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[11]*Ibid.*, p. 128.

here is the way in which an organization changes as a function of time

and evolution to become something that is both the same and yet new.

Thus, although a particular company may keep many of the same employees

for a number of years, and may work in the same general field, it must

constantly retool its ideas about the management of people, and the

best ways in which to produce the desires of both labor and management.

Everyone must be able to realize benefits from cooperating to make the

system effective, and one important means of accomplishing this is by

means of constantly keeping abreast of the changes of mood and under-

standing of the human power involved in the system. All of these, then,

are involved in Scott's understanding of growth within the system.

C. THE LOCAL CHURCH AS A SYSTEM

We have seen thus far the way in which one man outlines the full

range of a system. For Scott, this means the parts of the system, the

linking processes of the system, and the goals of the system. With

this as our basis of understanding of a system, we shall now apply this

to the local church situation, analyzing the local church in Scott's

categories. With this analysis before us, we should then be able to

proceed to look at some of the ways in which we might work with and

through the system which we have delineated to bring the fruits of our

entire study to bear on the life of the local church.

As in the other parts of this study where examples were neces-

sary, we shall remain with one example, and allow it to be illustrative.

We shall therefore analyze the United Methodist Church, on the local

church level, in Scott's categories. At this point, rather than taking

a specific church, we shall look at the normative pattern that is
found in the 1968 *United Methodist Book of Discipline.*[12]

1. Parts of the System

We first look at the various parts of the system, i.e. at the
various parts of the local church which function together to help the
church reach its goals. From Scott's outline, we therefore see that
the first part of the system is individuals. In the local church at
this point we are talking both about the clergy and the laity. In both
cases there are certain personalities, attitudes, and motives brought
into the system. This was brought out in some detail in the first
chapter of this study, and it is in this context that the importance
of the relationship among the various individuals becomes crucial.
From our earlier discussion it becomes quite evident how this relation-
ship can affect the life of the local church. Thus, the clergy and
laity are the important individuals in the local church system. The
differences which exist among the individuals and groups represented
here can have a very constructive or destructive relationship to the
overall effectiveness of the local church system. For example, if in
a local church there exists a pastor who is highly motivated to work
in the field of social action and has relatively little concern for
such things as Christian education, and if the bulk of the laity is
composed of people who question the whole place of the church in social
affairs, then the system could have some real trouble in operating at

[12]United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1968).

all, let alone efficiently. This is what is meant by the individuals

in this system being important to the operation of the system.

The second part of the system mentioned by Scott is formal

organization. In the United Methodist Church there is a great deal

of organization on the formal level. One need only read through the

section in the *Discipline* on the "local church" to understand this.[13]

The highest level of formal organization in the local United Methodist

Church is the Charge Conference. It is this body which is the link

between the local church and the national church, and it is this body

which evaluates the general life of the local church. As set forth in

the *Discipline* the Charge Conference is made up of particular indi-

viduals, e.g. the pastor, the lay leader, chairman of work areas, etc.

Thus, the participants, at least in terms of roles, are not selected

through a voting procedure of the local church (although each one of

them might have gotten his position through an election at some time).

The second most important body in the local United Methodist

Church is the Administrative Board. This board is really the legisla-

tive board of the local church, and concerns itself with the approval

of programs, although it is finally subject to the Charge Conference.

The main reason that it has so much influence in the life of the local

church is that it meets at least quarterly, and often once per month.

Thus, the members can take their concerns to this board, and have them

acted upon much more quickly than if they had waited for the next

Charge Conference, which usually meets only once per year. Again, like

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[13]*Ibid.*, pp. 82ff.

the Charge Conference, the membership of the Administrative Board is defined in the *Discipline*.

There are lots of other formal organizations within the life of the local United Methodist Church. To name a few of these, which are for the most part self-explanatory, they include: the Council on Ministries, the Committee on Nominations and Personnel, the Committee on Pastor-Parish relations, the Committee on Finance, the Trustees, the work areas, the age level and family coordinators, the membership secretary, the Women's Society, the United Methodist Men, etc. Really, there is a formal organization for most any possible area or project that might take place within the life of the local church. Thus, if someone wanted to change the worship life of the local church, he would take his concern to the Commission on Worship, which has been established for the purpose of dealing with the worship life of the local church. If a member of the church had a concern for a particular area of social need in the local community, he would go to the Commission on Social Concerns, which would evaluate his concern, and take some sort of request for action to the Council on Ministries. In essence, in the local United Methodist Church, there is perhaps as much organization as any group would allow. And these formal organizations have the authority of the general church, through the *Discipline*, to support their existence and functioning.

The third part of the system pointed out by Scott is the informal organizations. When we try to define the informal organizations which exist within any given local United Methodist Church, we find ourselves faced with a difficult task. Certainly, the informal

organizations of the local church differ from situation to situation, and therefore even generalizations present problems.

The kinds of informal organizations which exist in many local United Methodist Churches are usually in the form of cliques which emerge from within the membership. These cliques may be formed from various reasons, e.g. people have worked together on several committees, or people have sung together in the choir, or people have organized various activities with one another. Whatever the reason, most churches find that they have within their framework these somewhat closed circles of like-minded individuals. Often the leadership of the church will emerge from the "in" group of the church, and thus these groups end up with a great deal of not only power but also authority.

It is important to note the existence and functioning of the informal groups within the church, for they also can be agents which can work for the good or the bad of the local situation. Both the laity and clergy alike should have some idea of who is involved in these particular groups, so that they might be effectively worked with and through for the general good of the entire system. In most local church situations, it is not difficult to gain some idea of where these groups exist, and the bulk of the people who are involved.

The fourth part of the system mentioned by Scott is the status and role-expectancies. In the local church there would be certain status and role-expectancies both on the part of the clergy and the laity. Actually, in reference to the clergy, laymen have some idea of what the role of the minister is, and what the role of the layman

is. Not only do these ideas differ tremendously from layman to layman, but they also are often far from the idea of his role that the minister holds himself. Thus, whereas one layman thinks the minister ought to minister just to the "spiritual" needs of the congregation, i.e. lead worship, Bible studies, and prayer, another layman might think that it is the role of the minister to involve himself almost totally in the pressing social needs of the local community. The minister in question might feel that neither of these do justice to his own understanding of his role, which might include an emphasis upon preaching and marriage counseling.

As was lifted out by Hadden's study, this particular part of the system is very important, for it is quite obvious from his statistics that the whole question of the role of the minister and that of the layman is not adequately defined for either of them. In order for the system to work, then, there must be some time spent in working together *as a local church* to define the roles which exist, and the status which goes along with them. The whole question of Christian community is also obviously involved here. Whereas a physician might have one particular perspective on life to share with the congregation, a refrigeration repairman might have another and equally valuable contribution to make. Their own personal status or roles apart from the local church system ought not to reflect their respective statuses and roles outside the church. Both are highly important to the life of the local church.

The fifth part of the system for Scott is the physical environment of the work situation. For the local church this means the church

building, the educational plant, and whatever other physical factors might exist to serve the needs of a particular local church. The plant itself can be an important asset or liability to the effectiveness of the local church. If the plant is inadequate to serve the needs of the participants, then the program is going to be impaired. If the building is overly adequate, i.e. if there is a great deal more plant than the local church either needs or can afford, then the efficiency of the local church is also going to be hindered. If the plant coincides with the local church's needs and goals, however, it can be used to great advantage for general ministry. The membership can then see the effectiveness of their dollars, the community will realize the work of the local plant, and the clergy will be enabled to help the local church to keep expanding its ministry.

Unfortunately, the plant or physical environment of the work situation is often the focus of the church's energies. This means that programs are either limited or sacrificed for the building budget. In this way the outreach of the church may be seriously restricted. Therefore, the physical environment *is*, as Scott points out, an important part of the system.

2. Linking Processes of the System

After looking at these parts of the system, we turn to the processes which link the parts together. The three processes mentioned by Scott were communication, balance, and decision. Thus, the question which we now ask is, "how do these three linking processes become important in the local church system?"

Communication is as critical in the local church system as in any other system. Often programs are not supported due to lack of communication, or failure to clarify the communication which exists. This happens on all levels of the life of the local church. For example, though the pastor may think he is communicating one thing through his sermon, something quite different may be "heard" by the congregation. Something which the minister regarded as of minor importance in his sermon may become magnified by a particular listener, and taken as the crux of his sermon. Or it is also possible that something which the minister has said may be misinterpreted by a layman, causing difficulty which would have been avoided through clear communication.

Communication is the major avenue through which the program of the whole church is either facilitated or hindered. With proper communication, i.e. one in which all parts of the system are heard and in which there might be feedback between the sender and receiver of the message, the program of the local church can be much more easily reached or carried out.

Within the local church there are many obvious places where communication may get stopped or distorted. For example, although the minister may have perfectly clear in his own mind what it is that he wants to do, if he fails to communicate this with the members of his congregation and discuss with them the various ramifications of his action, then he might have real problems in realizing his goal. If he utilized communication in a more positive manner, discussing and evaluating and transforming his original ideas with laymen in an attempt to

come up with the best possible idea, then he would have a real chance
to honestly lead the movement of the system.

The second linking process pointed out by Scott was balance. As
Hadden's study pointed out most sharply this is one area in which the
local church is completely neglecting or forgetting. The relationships
between the various parts of the system are not kept in balance. While
the clergymen are moving in the direction of personal involvement in
social issues, they are not discussing their theological or ethical
motivation with the laymen of their churches. While laymen are refus-
ing to participate in social activities, they are not analyzing and
communicating their own motivation and attitudes. The entire balance
of the system is thus put in a very precarious position.

If the local church is in fact to overcome the schism which
exists between the laymen and clergymen over this question of the rela-
tionship between theology and ethics, then the question of balance is
going to have to be taken more seriously. This means that the minister
as leader of the local church is going to have to begin to recognize
the various facets of his organization which exist, i.e. is going to
have to look more carefully at the system of which he is a part. The
same thing holds true for the laymen. When both of these parts of the
system have seen the whole rather than just the part or parts with
which they have been connected, then balance can become a live option.
Through balance, then, the system can much more efficiently proceed
towards its goals.

The third linking process discussed was decision. In the local
church this is often an area where there is trouble, and it exists for

precisely the same reason that trouble may exist from imbalance. The problem is that both clergy and laity alike have neglected the overview of the system; decisions are made with little or no regard for the whole system, but only for the particular part from which the decision issues.

There are many levels of decision within the local United Methodist Church. As stated previously, the Charge Conference is the ultimate decision-making body for the local church. There are many decisions made between meeting times of this particular body, however, and often it is these decisions which create the turmoil. For example, the minister, working within his rights according to the *Discipline,* may decide to completely change the worship pattern of the local church. Thus, instead of having two services of worship on Sunday, one at 9:00-10:00 and another at 11:00-12:00, he may decide to have only one at 9:30-10:30. Although this may seem a very trivial matter, it could seriously disrupt not only the pattern of worship which has been a traditional part of a particular church, but also the rapport which he has with his people. If this particular minister would con-sult the congregation before the decision, however, telling them his idea and the reasons behind it, and then listen to possible revisions and/or suggestions from the congregation, then the decision would have a much better chance of being accepted and of succeeding.

Really, in the area of decision, one finds that one must learn how to deal with conflict creatively. On any given issue in the local church there are often at least two sides. Although a given answer will obviously satisfy most fully only one of these factions, the

process of defining the answer can actually work as a time to gain more support for the final answer from all factions. Decision-making is definitely a process, and it does link the parts of the system in a dynamic way.

3. Goals of the System

We turn next to the goals of the system. Scott's three goals are stability, growth and interaction. In reference to the first of these goals, stability, the local church has often put this first. Thus, one finds churches which are primarily motivated more by a maintenance function than anything else. One strives to perpetuate the church, regardless of the fact that it may no longer be in the right place or have the necessary answer for the particular situation.

Given this as a possibility, however, one finds that stability is nonetheless an important goal of a local church. In order to maintain any kind of witness in the local community, the church has to continue to exist. Thus, it must continue to raise money to support its program and to maintain or expand its facilities. What seems to be an important point about stability as a goal for the local church, however, comes at recognizing that although this is important, it is not ultimately *the* goal from which motivation for programming arises. The church must rather take its motivation from its missionary understanding of the Christian message, and emphasize stability only insofar as it helps to retain a witness to Christ in a particular area or location.

The second goal that Scott discussed, growth, is a more important

goal, if one is to put them in some kind of priority arrangement. Growth in terms of expanding the depth of the commitment for the already-Christian and promoting the meaning of this commitment for the non-Christian, is really the major task which confronts the local church. Although stability is important, growth is more important, i.e. in terms of motivation.

Growth in the local church may be thought of in many different ways. An expansion in program, new facilities, or the recruitment of additional members are all components of growth in the life of the local church. The deepening of the commitment of the individual participant members is also a very important aspect of growth, however. As Hadden clearly established, the depth of personal commitment is a very important aspect of the current crisis between clergy and laity. And from this one could correctly infer that this aspect of growth is a real priority for discussion and action in the life of the local church today. Hence, though numbers are important as are buildings and programs, the real question is the depth of faith of the people who are already involved. Their growth in faith should be a major thrust of the contemporary church.

The third goal, interaction, is obviously integrally related to the previously discussed goals. Neither stability nor growth are really live options without the move towards interaction among all parts of the system. Only as the minister bounces his ideas off those of the congregation, for example, do they become actively a part of the life of the whole system.

Really, interaction among all the parts of the system, through

the three linking processes, is the dynamic way through which the life of the local church is sparked. Without interaction, i.e. without positive interaction which includes a kind of give and take attitude on the part of all the individuals involved in the system, the future of the local church rests in a very tenuous position. It is only a matter of time before this shell which passes for a local church crumbles.

D. WORKING THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH SYSTEM

These, then, are the points of the system as Scott has outlined them as they might be related to the local church. The next question, which is really the crux of this whole introduction of systems analysis, is, "how does one take this kind of analysis of the local church and work with and through it to bring the essence of the rest of this study to bear on the life of the local church?" In order to make the question even more manageable, "how would a minister put this study to work in the life of his local United Methodist Church?"

The answer to both of these questions seems quite simple: in order to put this study to work in the life of the local church, one should utilize the systems approach to management, and work it out through that. So that this statement might take on a bit more character, however, let us personalize it and see how a United Methodist minister might work through his local church to make the results of this study effective.

Speaking generally, the minister would first have to have a rather clear-cut general idea of exactly what it was that he wanted

to bring to bear on his system, i.e. the local church complex. Since
this has been worked out in the preceding chapters, we will assume that
we have in mind the general content which he would want to utilize.
With this content in mind, he then would have to look at the system,
taking into account all of the facets already mentioned.

The minister would then first take his general idea to the
Commission on Education, because it is this particular group which has
been given the responsibility for the education of the congregation at
large. Rather than taking to this group a set idea, the minister would
have a somewhat general outline of his idea, and would encourage group
participation in terms of not only accepting or rejecting the idea, but
in terms of filling in the specifics. By allowing the group to tailor
the undertaking to its own needs and style, the idea could become much
more a part of each member, and thus it would have a much greater
chance of getting into the life of the general local church.

Assuming that the Commission on Education accepted the idea, and
gave it some form, the idea would then be taken to the Council on
Ministries to go through the same procedure again, and thus would be
reshaped and rehandled. After this process, it would go in its newly
refined state to the Administrative Board where the church at large
could react to the idea. It would be at this point that the minister
could decide himself whether or not the idea was still working
generally toward the goal which he had originally envisioned. If so,
he could help to reinforce the direction and importance of the study.

All the time that this idea was going from committee to commit-
tee, the minister should be actively engaged in discussing it through

the various parts of the system, and through the various linking proc-

esses, keeping in mind always the general goals. If he thinks that

helping the congregation to wrestle with the question of the relation-

ship between theology and ethics is an important one, then he will try

to work as best he can through the given channels. Thus, in addition

to the formal channels we have mentioned, the minister would have to

be actively engaged in discussion with the informal channels. Often

the power of the organization resides with the informal level or

organization, so this can be crucial. In political terms, one could

say that the minister would be working through the power structure of

the church in order to effect the desired change or introduction of

this particular emphasis.

Since making this study operable in the local church would take

massive effort and time, i.e. up to one year, including education on

all levels, there would need to be general church support. Thus, all

the parts of the system, and all that makes it operable would have to

be contacted. In short, communication and definition of the idea would

be essential to its acceptance.

By taking into account all the facets of the system, the minister

would be able to honestly involve the entire group in the process of

formulation and decision-making. This is obviously necessary for the

success of the idea. And since the final product would be increased

growth and stability, both in terms of depth of personal commitment

and in terms of bringing in new people, it would be important that the

minister take account of all the possible assets and liabilities to

success. It would be through interaction among all the parts that

final action would be taken.

While it has been simplified for the sake of brevity, one can get the general idea of the way in which one could put this study to work in the local church. One would see the way in which it hooked into the overall goals of the local church, and then help to make it operable in the life of the church by involving the constituency of the church in examining the ways in which it could be brought into the system for positive use.

From this brief sketch, one can also see the way in which systems analysis is closely linked with the position on theology and ethics which has been utilized in this study. The emphasis has been on Christian community, and on the involvement of all Christian people in the ongoing life of the church. This style of management not only maximizes communal involvement, but in fact depends upon it.

Thus, we end where we began. We are faced with a "community" which is tearing apart because of the lack of interaction and concern among its members. If we are going to succeed in building a real community out of the existent fragmentation, then we are going to have to take our theological and ethical stance seriously. And since this can be put into effect in a local church most effectively and efficiently through a contemporary understanding of business management, i.e. through systems analysis, then we must get to work on understanding this and working through it to realize our common goals. Motivated by promise and hope, given new direction through the resurrection of Christ, and equipped with an understanding of how our faith might be effectively put to work in the local community and the world at large,

we can begin to serve the one who first served us!

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